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#278

MAR/APR 2015

FAMOUS MONSTERS[®]

**DIRECTOR
JENNIFER LYNCH
TALKS SEASON 5**

THE WALKING DEAD

**PLUS:
FIVE DECADES 'LOST IN SPACE'
PAUL TOBIN
DOC SAVAGE
CARRIE: THE MUSICAL
AND MORE!**



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"I SAID, 'THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE PALATABLE EVERY WEEK. IT CAN'T BE. HE'S JUST BAD.' SO, I STARTED, SUBLIMINALLY, TO INTRODUCE COMEDIC VILLAINY, WHICH IS PALATABLE. THAT YOU CAN LIVE WITH ... AND THE REST, AS THEY SAY, IS HISTORY."

- JONATHAN HARRIS ON THE EVOLUTION OF DR. SMITH



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OPENING WOUNDS

Due to space constraints, my FM 277 tribute to inspirational teachers was incomplete. So here, with my sincerest thanks, is the final part of the list of these Crystal Lake Central High School scholastic samurai that exemplify the power and lasting effect a great teacher can have on their students.

Kelvin Gott: A Warrior Poet in the truest sense of the term. He taught me the value of the individual, of the power that each one of us possesses to affect change in the world around us, and the dual-edged sword of the logical fallacy. He introduced me to great literature like Thom Jones' *THE PUGILIST AT REST* and Descartes' *DISCOURSE ON METHOD* (still favorites to this day). He emphasized taking time to find life's hidden gems and not being afraid to take opportunities for betterment of both self and society.

Bill Walkner: Words as weapons and the dangerous mind that wields them. Mr. Walkner was my Honors Rhetoric teacher who emphasized critical thinking mixed with a curious, ever-seeking mind. The readings in his class ranged from Pirsig to Senge and all points in-between. Films like *MINDWALK* from physicist Fritjof Capra left a strong impression and encouraged new ways of thinking about everyday happenings. Each class was a surprise, with new readings from new sources with lots of discussions where students were encouraged to find their own conclusions. He's truly a master of the "light touch" philosophy of guiding instead of pushing.

Renee Bartholomew: The woman who taught me how to love the classics. I regret that I wasn't mature enough to truly appreciate the absolute gems she was handing us every day in our World Literature class. But the power of her lessons stuck with—and ultimately led me, years after high school, to track down many of the stories she taught. From Shakespeare to Solzhenitsyn, I read them with her words of wisdom in mind and never looked back. She inspired a love of the classic in me that has caused me to seek out so many works that I would have passed up for fear of them being boring or stodgy.

Thank you to all the teachers out there facilitating knowledge and changing lives. And GO TIGERS!

Ed Blair
Executive Editor

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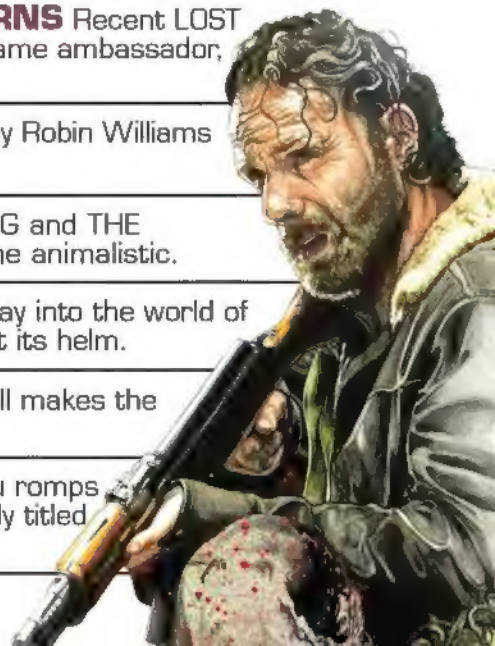
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TERROR DESIGN

By
D.M. CUNNINGHAM

DEADLY DEVICES

It isn't often that a Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist and an iconic horror film franchise are connected in the same sentence or thought. People often refer to a "Rube Goldberg" without really knowing what or who a "Rube" is. Reuben Lucius Goldberg, born in 1883, was a famous cartoonist known for creating elaborate cartoon contraptions using wheels, gears, animals, and everything else under the sun to make a simple task extraordinarily complicated. The painless tooth-extractor is a personal favorite.

In 2004, James Wan and Leigh Whannel brought the Rube Goldberg idea to life in a dark thriller known as SAW. The low budget film was a sleeper hit and went on to spawn six sequels and countless nightmares. Its characters were usually

trapped in deadly devices meant to teach them each a lesson by a killer named Jigsaw. The devices themselves were real working practical effects built to fit onto or around the actor without the aid of computer-generated imagery, adding to the realism and terror—a rarity in today's digital filmmaking world.

When Wan and Whannel decided to step back and continue their work on the series in a producer capacity it left the door open for other masterminds to expand on the madness. Film is known as the director's medium. But without a script (the blueprint), the director has no foundation to stand upon.

Enter craftsmen Marcus Dunstan and Patrick Melton, a writing duo that have been writing together since Halloween

weekend of 1999. Connecting in college, they eventually moved to Los Angeles and won the role of feature writers on Project Greenlight in 2004, when they created the horror film FEAST. It was that film that became a springboard for them to build a brand as go-to genre wizards that deliver the bloody goods.

Was it coincidence or fate that they became the writers of the final four films of the SAW franchise that were released on Halloween every year? I'll let you decide. Although Marcus and Patrick now have several films notched into their writing belt and have sky-rocketed to working on films like PACIFIC RIM with Guillermo del Toro, I wanted to drag them back to the basement to discuss those deadly devices, and creating them on the page.

Famous Monsters. After FEAST, you guys were brought on to one of the biggest horror franchises in the genre. Can you tell us how that came about?

Marcus Dunstan. It was time to follow a trend... and what a trend it was! SAW was the film that issued a gut-check to the Japanese horror remake cycle. No more stringy hair. No more PG-13. No more teens. This was now a world dominated by fractured adults facing the worst in themselves on a clock. This Jigsaw was going to "help" them at any price. Horror could now be rated R. Spill the red. Tell a twisting mystery and open number one at the box office to declare, "Horror doesn't have to play it safe, pander, or recycle... it can lash out with a chokehold and own just as much as the blockbuster."

Patrick Melton. So we wrote a script called "The Collector". It got a lot of attention, and the SAW guys thought about making it for a minute. They even talked about doing it as a SAW prequel. That didn't happen, but it got us in the door with them. When Leigh didn't want to do any more after SAW 3, we pitched the next trilogy and got the gig.

MD. That was an honor. It was turning point creatively and professionally. We would've have been asterisks in the film industry if it weren't for SAW. Due to the fertile soil of James Wan and Leigh Whannell's trilogy, we were able to get a foothold in the industry and grow.

FM. The films had become known for Jigsaw and the devices by that time. When stepping into the writing shoes, was there a mandate to create bigger and better devices? Was the thought of

writing that overwhelming?

MD. Each draft would start out with placeholder traps. Patrick and I would brainstorm and build the film's themes within the traps. Then they could be swapped and altered right up until the last minute, so long as the theme was still present to keep tissue with the story. There would be Rube-Goldberg-Roundtables wherein we, along with the director and producers, would sit about and spitball concepts for traps that could push the experience a bit further without busting a budget threshold or stretching plausibility too thin. Every time would begin with, "What could be built from a trip to Home Depot?" That would also be mixed with traps developed from previous entries or research that, for whatever reason, could not be prepped in time for the previous film. However, the most effective traps were often the most intimate and less expensive. The loss of an arm isn't necessarily a stimulus a lot of people can identify with... but the paper cut? That stings just to read it.

Over the course of the subsequent film entries, the series did escalate, but ideally with the scale of the story as well. SAW 6's dismantling of the health care industry required some scale to justify the "lesson" being brought down upon the nationwide practice. The ramp-up of the scale was also beautifully balanced by Kevin Greutert's direction and editing. He crafted a wonderful dark fable.

FM. Let's talk about creating the intricate deaths and devices on the page. Did you map them out in the writing, or did it become a production design or FX design creation?

PM. We wrote everything out. Then we'd

often have to talk it through with the designers so they really understood our idea. They'd often build out from there, making changes and literally building the thing. It was actually quite cool.

FM. Were there any devices that were cut from the script because of it being "too much"?

MD. There was a doozy... there was a concept, which was wonderful: a shifty lawyer defending a known, wealthy criminal would be rigged to his client. The wealthy criminal was heavier-set, and the lawyer was meek. They would awaken upon opposing scales (the scales of justice). The trap was a metaphor for the choice made to defend a known villain in order to feast upon excess. How much would a villain give to live? How much would a lawyer swallow to take?

The diabolical trap is then revealed as a lipo-suction tube, which is fed from the belly of the criminal into the mouth of the Lawyer. Could the lawyer swallow enough of the criminal to balance the scales of justice?

That one was a real head-shaker. "Wow... can we do that? No? Thought so."

FM. Gross! Tell me more...

PM. Definitely. Sometimes it was just too tough to build... but other times it was just too graphic. We had a rapist get his bits and pieces sliced off, but that was mixed as being too graphic (even though Eli Roth got to do it in HOSTEL 2).

FM. That sneaky Mr. Roth. Okay, when you finally saw the devices come to life, how close was it to your original concept?

MD. 100%.

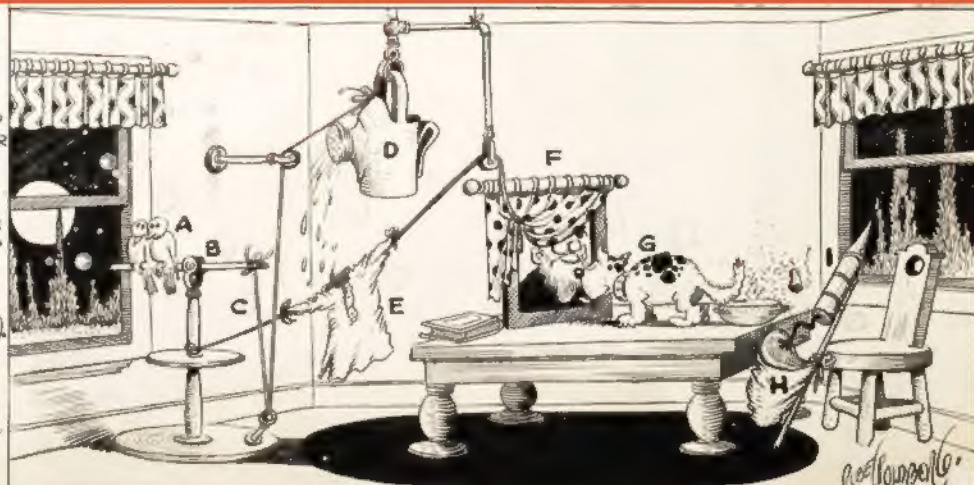
FM. Wow, that's good.

MD. They really were spot-on. We came

PROFESSOR BUTTS TRIPS OVER A HAZARD ON A MINIATURE GOLF COURSE AND LANDS ON AN IDEA FOR AN AUTOMATIC DEVICE FOR EMPTYING ASH TRAYS.

BRIGTH FULL MOON (A) CAUSES LOVE BIRDS (B) TO BECOME ROMANTIC AND AS THEY GET TOGETHER THEIR WEIGHT CAUSES PERCH (C) TO TIP AND PULL STRING (D) WHICH UPSETS CAN (E) AND SPRINKLES WOOLEN SHIRT (F) CAUSING IT TO SHRINK AND DRAW ASIDE, CURTAIN EXPOSING PORTRAIT OF WIGWAG DUPS MASTER (G). AS PUP (H) SEES MASTER'S PICTURE HE WIGWAGS TAIL FOR JOY AND UPSETS ASH TRAY (I), SPILLING ASHES AND SMOULDERING BUTTS INTO ASBESTOS BAG (J) ATTACHED TO SKY ROCKET (K). BUTT (L), PASSING FUSE (M), IGNITES IT AND CAUSES ROCKET TO SHOOT OUT OF WINDOW DISPOSING OF ASHES.

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE TWENTY OR THIRTY HIGH-POWERED AEROPLANES READY TO GO OUT AND SEARCH FOR THE ASBESTOS BAG.





aboard the fourth film, so the crew had such a shorthand that any imagination could be made real within millimeters of hope.

PM. Yes, they were very close. Often better than we imagined.

FM. I don't know, guys—I feel like you can imagine a great deal. So what was your favorite device?

PM. I liked the playground twirly ride with all the people tied down in part six. It wasn't just the game, it was the design and intensity. I thought it came together very well.

FM. I'd agree. Marcus?

MD. The skinhead trap from the final *SAW*. I'd wanted a trap to punish racists since our first go, and I waited and waited and waited to unleash that moment. It was a joy to see it go in full 3D gory glory. "We're all the same on the inside..."

FM. By the final installment you've spilled lots of blood and already had a script for *THE COLLECTOR*, which some might say took a page from the *SAW* book. Can we talk briefly about that and the devices in it?

MD. *THE COLLECTOR* originally was all about the face-off: the Thief versus the Killer. It was cat and mouse all the way.

However, once we broke ground on designing who this killer would be and what his goal was, it opened up quite a few opportunities to wake up the action and develop our villain's skill set. We were familiar with traps and now had an opportunity to develop them toward defining a cypher of evil. He was a spider and viewed us as flies. Every trap was based upon hunting and gathering: snares, webs, animals, bait, etc. Our villain brought survival techniques into suburbia.

PM. The booby traps in *THE COLLECTOR* evolved as we went. We liked the idea of a house being rigged and people being forced to move throughout. The Collector himself was an exterminator... but he just caught people. So, we liked making the houses just big mouse traps. He certainly has a different mentality than Jigsaw.

FM. We talk a lot about bloodshed and the horror aspect, but these films are morality plays woven within a mystery. Conflicted characters trapped in puzzles forcing them to truly look inside themselves—literally, for some. Why do you think horror films are important, and what do they mean to you?

MD. Horror films are there to show us that somebody can have a far worse day than we ever could. They are the roller coaster you can experience in a theater or at home. They are a communal joy and have inspired more costumes, conventions, and friendships than any other genre. And finally, horror films can be as terrifying as a first date. Therefore, horror films often serve as the very best thing to do on a first date, so all those nerves can be blamed on the dark, and maybe, just maybe... when the big jump comes... you jump closer together.

PM. For me, horror films are fun. They're often tricks and mind games, like finding out who the killer is, so I've always enjoyed stuff like that. As an adult, it becomes tougher and tougher to see something that really surprises me... but when I do, I'm a total kid again.

Most of us monster kids agree with those sentiments, guys. When we discover a film that transcends the genre, we all celebrate the achievement as if we were just given a special gift.

We will never know if Rube Goldberg would be exhilarated or terrified that his concepts have gone on to inspire twisted concoctions of bloody violence in one of the most successful horror franchises in history. But I would like to think that he would be in the back of the darkened theater, chuckling to himself.

Here's to you, Rube. May you continue to inspire.





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**WE'RE OFF TO SEE
THE**

WALKERS

**JENNIFER LYNCH SETS OUT TO DIRECT
HER FIRST EPISODE OF THE WALKING DEAD**

INTERVIEW BY JOE MOE



DIRECTED BY JENNIFER LYNCH

SURVEILLANCE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DAVID LYNCH

CASTING BY JENNIFER LYNCH
COSTUME DESIGNER JENNIFER LYNCH
HAIR BY JENNIFER LYNCH
MAKEUP BY JENNIFER LYNCH
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JENNIFER LYNCH
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JENNIFER LYNCH
PRODUCED BY JENNIFER LYNCH
WRITTEN BY JENNIFER LYNCH
DIRECTED BY JENNIFER LYNCH

It's difficult to crawl out from the shadow of a parent in the same creative field, but Jennifer Lynch has proved time and time again that she's more than just "David Lynch's daughter".

For generations, *Famous Monsters* readers have dreamt of making movies. Back in 1993, at only 19 years old, Jennifer Lynch realized that dream when she directed the controversial *BOXING HELENA*—a notoriously dark fantasy about a woman (Sherilyn Fenn) held captive and amputated, limb by limb, until she is half the woman she used to be and a dead ringer for Prince Randian "The Living Torso" from Tod Browning's *FREAKS* (1932). The morbid and whimsical *BOXING HELENA* would cast the young Lynch into the limelight as a filmmaker and into the "lame-light" as the target of intense scrutiny and hardcore criticism—from angry feminists railing against the (truncated) "little woman" to the "I don't get it" posse to whinemakers of the sour grape varietal, howling about privilege in view of the support and encouragement of Jennifer's famous filmmaking father David Lynch. The village mob was so relentless that Jennifer went underground, turning from the spotlight of showbiz to the privacy of motherhood with the birth of her daughter. After a lengthy hiatus, Jennifer returned to her moviemaking calling in 2008 with the twisted thriller *SURVEILLANCE*, which earned her the prestige of being the first woman ever to win the New York City Horror Film Festival's "Best Director" award. She followed up with the brutal 2013

horror film *CHAINED*, starring a wickedly sadistic Vincent D'Onofrio—a steadfast believer in Lynch's vision and work.

Unlike her legendary dad and his abstract and quirky masterpieces, Jennifer Lynch's horrors are distilled from the most familiar, mundane settings to lull us... for a moment. A town just around the corner in "Anywhere, USA". Characters you may have passed a dozen times in a day but never suspected the atrocities they're capable of. Sticky suspense, at once seductive and dreadful. Lynch exhibits agility in exposing the brutality in horror while maintaining a compassion that never glamorizes raw cruelty and suffering, no matter how graphic the scene. She makes the viewer responsible for our attraction or repulsion to the images on screen. She possesses a unique ability to show violence with the humanity left intact, for scale. Perhaps this balance is unique to an artist who happens to be a woman and has experienced not only a life of acute observation, but the painful act and sublime phenomenon of birthing another human being from her own body. Most recently, Lynch has directed multiple



episodes of *TEEN WOLF* and *FINDING CARTER* for TV.

Today Jennifer Lynch lives and works in Hollywood with her artist husband Jim and their boxer, Zeppelin, an affectionate dog who does cut the silhouette of a dirigible or at least a fur-covered loaf of bread. Agent Smith, a friendly rabbit, appears intermittently to beg for pretzels and tortilla chips from a snack jar. Together, livestock and humans serve as constant muses confabulating in their backyard fantasy oasis (complete with Koi pond!), lounging and laughing, making

clandestine midnight Sci-Fi music videos for friends. It's wildly creative household that can (and will) construct a stage of found wood or cannibalize a lawn chair to make a prop or costume for an impromptu coffee commercial shoot for dad (Yep,

David Lynch's organic coffee beans) in their urban Eden. A few years past 19 now, Jennifer has reclaimed her joy for all things movies. Her storyteller's eyes are wiser, but she still maintains the open countenance of a primitive discovering fire. When she laughs, often at the most inappropriate thing, she throws her head back so far you expect a giant PEZ to pop out of her neck. Her blonde dreadlocks, with their colorful ornaments and wrappings,

are an ever-shifting nest of streamers that frame her sun bronzed face. She's recently been tapped to direct an episode of THE WALKING DEAD. Jennifer, with her love of horror and grizzled pedigree in the genre, seems the ideal choice to join a lofty family of zombie-wranglers in directing an episode of the most popular horror show in the known universe

We met with Jennifer Lynch in her mystical Hollywood backyard on October 10th, the eve of her departure to Atlanta to



Lynch's films excel at disturbing imagery, from forced labor in **CHAINED** (TOP) to dismemberment in **BOXING HELENA** (BOTTOM).





start preproduction on *THE WALKING DEAD*. Sitting with her and husband Jim on overstuffed couches under their cozy Moroccan-ish canopy, Jennifer appeared hyped and spring-loaded to attack the work that lies ahead.

Jennifer Lynch. 'Twas the night before departure, and all through the house laundry was being done—oh, I forgot the laundry!

Famous Monsters. Do you know what the title of your *WALKING DEAD* episode is?

JL. I do not. I'll know tomorrow. They're very secretive. And I want to respect that. I come from a long line (my father) of secret-keepers.

FM. Speaking of your dad, David Lynch. Did he inspire you toward horror?

JL. Dad doesn't consider his films horror films. Dad thinks I make horror films. I don't think I make horror films as much as I make films about horrifying things. And I love horror. A lot of people find how I grew up, and the films that were being made around me, somewhat horrifying. Films like *THE ALPHABET*, *THE GRANDMOTHER*, and *ERASERHEAD*. But as a kid, I didn't know those were horrifying. I thought they were beautiful and romantic. I even consider my film *SURVEILLANCE* a romantic comedy.

FM. Romantic mayhem and murder. Any other early influences?

JL. I saw *THE SHINING* at a very young age. I was in the theater to see a movie with

my father and that trailer came on with the elevator doors opening and blood rushing toward the camera. My father leaned over to me and said, "We're seeing that!" So, *THE SHINING* got me. *FRIDAY THE 13TH* got me too, because there was something that felt very, I don't know, *raw* to me.

FM. And in your own movies, some of the characters are monstrous.

JL. I'm the kind of person, even when I was younger, who assumed there was humanity in the monsters. But I had this weird hypersensitivity. When I'd rush to make my bed in the morning and throw my stuffed animals on to the floor, I'd have to say, "No feelings, no feelings, no feelings!" Then later, when I put them back on the bed, I'd tell them, "Feelings back, feelings back, feelings back!" I felt ugly and broken and I felt that there was scar tissue swimming around in me looking for openings. I was born busted with club feet and put into casts an hour after I was born. I had the whole 24-hour-a-day headgear, braces, and orthopedic shoes. No wonder I had a crush on Frankenstein. One of my first fantasies was with the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Oh my god! I wanted to sleep with him so bad. I wanted him to carry me into the ocean and drown while he was having his way with me!

FM. Such specific fantasies...
[Husband Jim chimes in: "Cause she's a perv. Why do you think we have this pond in the back yard?"]

JL. It's a lagoon, Jim! My crushes were either for the humanity in Frankenstein's monster or the dark sexual violence of the

Creature from the Black Lagoon.

FM. Was your relationship with horror and monsters movie-based?

JL. Yeah. I read *THE AMITYVILLE HORROR* and *THE EXORCIST* over and over again. I guess that was the extent of written horror in my youth. There was some Poe in there, too. I did get in trouble at seven or eight when my father found me reading *HELTER SKELTER*. I remember him blocking the sunlight as he loomed over me and said, "Jennifer, there is dark and there is light and then there is evil. This is evil!" Then he pitched the book across the yard! So, that kind of defined it for me.

FM. In your movies you create psychos an audience can relate to, but who are capable of so much cruelty and carnage.

JL. Well, I guess some women are into the motorcycle bad boy. I'm into the guy who kills women. Thank god I married one! [Jim nods with self-satisfaction.] But I do adore the human monster. What is relatable about monster movies and scary movies in general is that, particularly with zombies, the monsters used to be us.

FM. Elements from your early encounter with Jack Torrance's transformation in *THE SHINING* and full circle to *THE WALKING DEAD*... maybe not so much *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, but...

JL. He was fish-like, but he had a man's body. I also loved dragons and he looked a little bit like a dragon to me. My other crushes were Gene Wilder and Alan Alda...



FM. Willy Wonka and Hawkeye Pierce?

JL. Yeah, I wanted a threesome with Gene Wilder and Alan Alda

[Jim thinks about it and shrugs, "Sure, whatever"]

FM. Let's talk about your relationship to THE WALKING DEAD prior to being hired to direct it

JL. I've seen bits of every season. I think what stopped me from keeping up with it weekly was the gift of working. And I love to binge watch. I have a lot of admiration

for people who watch week to week. The last show I was able to watch week to week was DEXTER. It was tough.

FM. THE WALKING DEAD is the most popular horror series in the world. What was it like getting the call?

JL. Well, I mean, as a fan it was always in my consciousness in the same way BREAKING BAD was. I was actually working on TEEN WOLF with cinematographer Dave Daniels who shot for THE WALKING DEAD and knew

the team. He said, "You know what you'd be great on? THE WALKING DEAD!" I said, "I'd f---ing love to do it." Through the connections I made, my name was put up. Then I had an interview. When I finally got the call the producers said, "It's your first episode, so it's a small one..." I put on a brave face and said, "Oh... um... great!" Then they laughed and said, "Nope, it's f---ing huge!"

FM. So what are your expectations? Hopes? Fears?

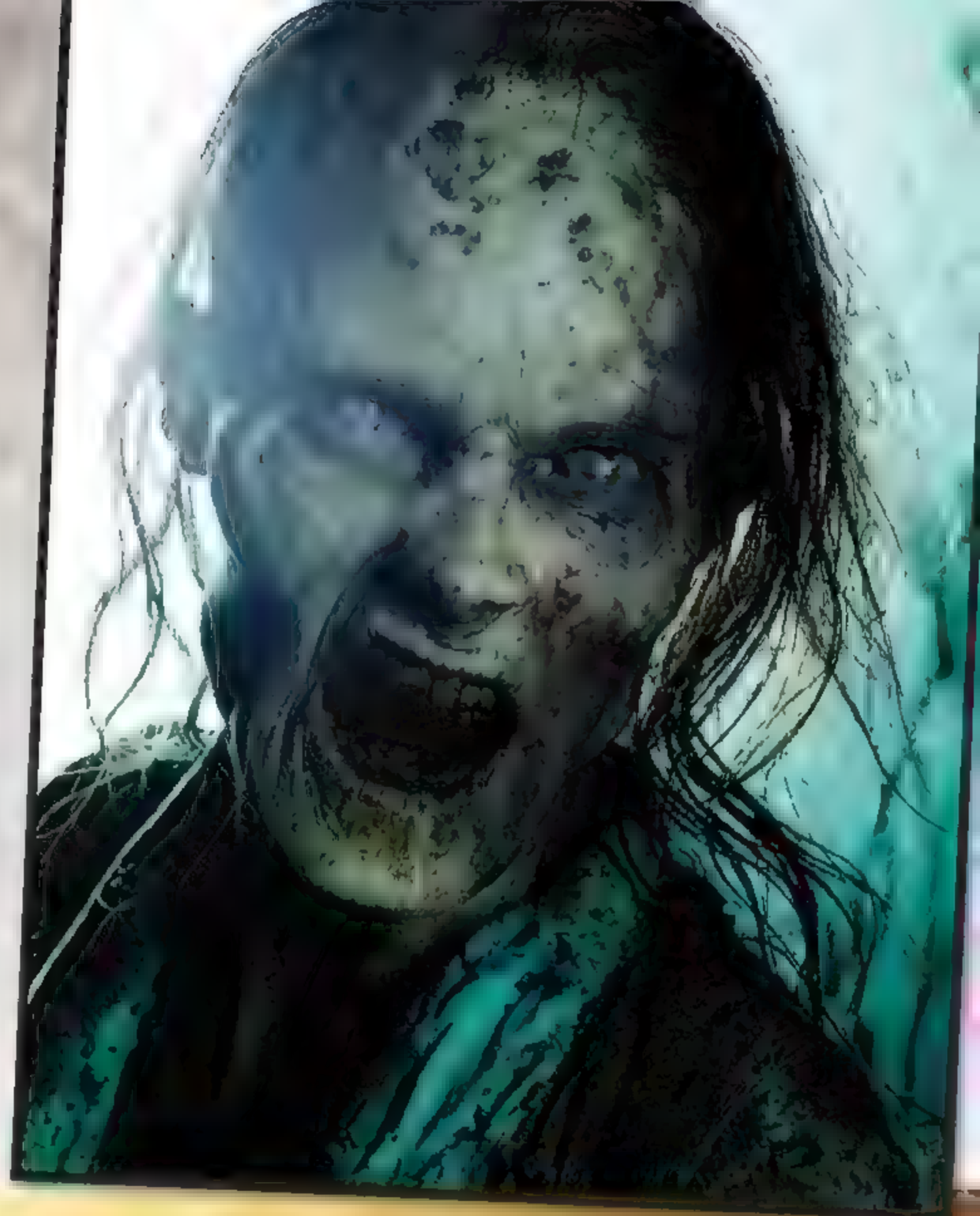
JL. It's funny because I have no idea what my episode is about right now. I can be imagining things much more difficult or impossible. But I love the supposedly impossible. Yeah, that's hot. My job in TV right now, which I'm really embracing, is to go into someone else's show and make it the best episode of someone else's show. I can and still leave a little bit of a mark.

FM. What imprint would you like to leave on the show?

JL. I would love the opportunity to explore terror in a new way. I think the characters have been through a lot, and at the beginning of this season they go through even more and they're in a new location. It's a new day. I would love to surprise people visually.

FM. Such a big cast of people who've been working together for years. How do you introduce yourself?

JL. Respectfully and joyfully. I'm no better than anyone else who's been there before. It's not my show. I'm there to play and to listen, and if there are things the actors feel they want to do but haven't gotten to do, I'm there to celebrate that. I love to walk on to set when I prep because I see what the rhythm is and where I can add things or change things or provide the production something that makes them say, "Okay, Jen was here, and it was nice." My advice is not just to be humble. It's to be forthright. The actors know so much about their characters





and so much about what they have or haven't done. Actors want to act. Let them play, and listen to them. I learn more about the stories by watching them and asking them questions like, "What have you never done?" or "What does your reaction to this situation feel like to you?"

FM. Do you have the luxury of time to meet everyone?

JL. I make the time even if I don't have the time. I make sure they know I'm not bullshitting when I say, "I'm here at your disposal." I want us all going home at night feeling really freaking proud of ourselves. It should be fun. If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong. It's very intimidating to walk onto any established set. It's like showing up late to a party...

FM. And having to be the boss.

JL. Yeah, you have to start telling everybody what games you're going to play and what you're going to talk about. You can't presume they're instantly going to respect you. But they should know that I instantly respect them.

FM. Do you have a particular character

within the group that intrigues you?

JL. I'm really looking forward to working with Norman Reedus (Daryl Dixon). There isn't anybody I'm not interested in working with. I wish Melissa Ponzio (Karen) hadn't gone away.

FM. "Gone away", huh?

JL. I had the very good fortune of working with her on *TEEN WOLF*, and she was amazing. There isn't anybody I'm not looking forward to. Things have been said to me that allude to the fact that there are many changes happening in the show and in my episode. I'm expecting every character to take a new spin. Like, someone who was a square will now be a hexagon. Get it?

FM. It's a character-driven show. We're primed for zombies and then in the middle of it all we fall in love with the people and forget the zombies. Then the zombies are back with a vengeance to surprise us!

JL. I love the idea that you become enveloped in what is human drama and there is that amnesia, because life for the humans does go on, and yet there is always a sort of residual tension because they can't really escape. I love people being trapped in places. So, I do love the element of how

we deal with one another in close quarters without killing each other or dying.

FM. Speaking of dying, if you had to choose one of the characters that had to die on your watch, who would it be?

JL. Hmmm. Carol (Melissa McBride). I think the way people might miss her would be fascinating. That's what interests me about characters "going away", because on TV shows and also in life, death for the person dying is a segue. It's only tough for the rest of us. It's tough for fans. Who would it be strange and beautiful to see being missed or absent and what would that feel like? I think the loss of Carol would be interesting. We certainly know how the others will be missed but there's just something about Carol...

FM. You're leaving early morning tomorrow.

JL. Let it be known that I am so f---ing excited. I have major girl wood!

Stay tuned and pick up FM 279 to read Jennifer Lynch's episode diaries, featuring exclusive photos!

BLACK PROM LIVES ON:

CARRIE SINGS AT 40 AND BEYOND!

by Kelly Dunn

It's an image every horror fan knows the newly crowned prom queen, innocent and sweet in her spotless gown, savoring the enthusiastic applause from her peers and teachers—former tormentors who now appear to be friends, celebrating with her. It's a perfect moment until a bucket tips overhead, dumping a deluge of blood onto the hapless girl, shaming her in front of everyone. The splashing gore is only a taste of the carnage to come. If any image can conjure the horrors of high school, this is the one. But it's also a nightmare that monster mavens enjoy experiencing again and again, in every media from the printed word to film, television, and now, the musical stage.

The publication of Stephen King's *CARRIE* in 1974 marked the advent of a new, genre-defining literary superstar. The book premiered in hardback, followed by a deal for paperback publication, plus a film deal thrown in for good measure. But *CARRIE* didn't really break into the zeitgeist—and the bestseller lists—until a couple of years later. In 1976, director Brian De Palma put *CARRIE* on the big screen, creating the unforgettable visual of prom queen Carrie (an otherworldly Sissy Spacek), her eyes huge with shock; her hair, face, and pale satin dress drenched in pig's blood. The film, thought by some critics to be one of the best horror movies of the modern era, fixed the image of the crazed, blood-spattered Carrie White, as well as

that of her cross-wielding, cult-crazed mother Margaret White (a fanatical Piper Laurie), in the public mind forevermore.

King's original novel climbed the bestseller lists as buzz about the film spread and filmgoers rushed to buy the book. King's name and fame spread far and wide, and though the author had already moved on to other wildly popular fictional characters, *CARRIE* always lurked in the collective imagination, ready to lash out yet again.

In 2014, the original *CARRIE*'s iconic status re-emerged combined with a recent chantable trend: the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. Participants doused themselves with buckets of ice water to encourage awareness and to raise funds to treat ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl, a fan of *CARRIE* and a friend of Stephen King, paid tribute to both with his version of the Ice Bucket Challenge. The bearded Grohl, attired in a white dress, wrist corsage, and tiara, enjoyed a moment waving to "classmates" intercut from the Brian De Palma movie until bandmates tipped a bucket of ice water onto him in a parody of the film's infamous prom scene. Grohl then dared Stephen King himself to participate. King stepped up, dedicating his own ice-water soak to his friend and literary chronicler Rocky Wood, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2010.

Wood has written several books about

King, including *STEPHEN KING: A LITERARY COMPANION*, and was recently the author's researcher for the novel *DOCTOR SLEEP*. Regarding *CARRIE*, Wood maintains that King's debut "may have been the most important novel he ever wrote." Not his best or his most epic, perhaps, but the most crucial in terms of launching King's career and introducing him to a broad mainstream audience. Wood himself became aware of King, the writer, after viewing *CARRIE*, the film. "Without the paperback rights and the kick along to his books from the movie, we may have lost the voice of modern horror," Wood says. But only "may." Surely King's storytelling gifts could not be denied by a public hungry for tales of uniquely American horror.

Still, De Palma's filmmaking skills certainly helped King's cause. "We must understand this was a golden age of horror films, so audiences were prepared for a top quality horror tale," Wood says. He points to several factors that make this film version of *CARRIE* stand out, such as De Palma's outstanding direction and the brilliant casting, which contributed greatly to the film's success. "De Palma let us understand each character and the multiple aspects of Carrie White—victim, hero, anti-hero, villain, force of nature," Wood says. Add to that the scenes that really got people talking and you have the makings of a masterpiece.



Despite critical pans to its original run (ABOVE), CARRIE: THE MUSICAL keeps coming back, perhaps in an attempt to capture the magic of the original movie (LEFT).

"Of course, the dream sequence ending generated immense word of mouth," observes Wood. "The pig's blood scene seemed instantly iconic and quite shocking for the standards of the time."

The foundation for any interpretation of CARRIE lies in King's talent for story and great character development, making even the over-the-top Margaret White seem true to life. "Margaret White is real because King observed a real woman who was like that," Wood says. "She also plays into the American fascination with and contempt for religious fanaticism—depending on your view of faith and, increasingly, your politics." Wood points out that many people recognize themselves or someone they know in many of King's villains. King doesn't merely type a stock character onto the page. Even for minor characters, "He creates fully drawn, complex people." And for scary characters the audience may find difficult to understand, "King finds one or two aspects that we can readily empathize with."

Wood notes that, being a story of adolescence, CARRIE utilizes Grimm tropes. "It's a reverse fairy tale, isn't it?" he remarks. "The 'ugly duckling' does go to the ball with the Prince, but the stepsisters get their public shaming of her for stepping out of line. Then the fun really starts!" Wood laughs. "It's a fairly simple storyline with clear characters that, apart from Margaret White, we all think we remember from high school."

Because there is so much in CARRIE that the audience can recognize (if not cringe at), movers, shakers, and moneymakers have continued to pursue King's telekinetic tale—not always with the best results. A 1999 sequel, *THE RAGE: CARRIE 2*, was panned, a 2002 NBC miniseries, *CARRIE*, fell flat, and a 2013 film remake starring Chloë Grace Moretz and Julianne Moore as Carrie and Margaret White elicited a bewildered query from Stephen King himself. "Why?"

It seemed no new CARRIE interpretation could quite measure up to the original De Palma tour de force. But it is CARRIE: THE MUSICAL that stands out as the both the strangest and the most triumphal entry in the CARRIE pantheon. The notion to turn CARRIE into a musical took shape in the 1980s. European producers saw huge potential for the novel's story of high school populars and misfits, particularly with the American theater audience. With a book by CARRIE film screenwriter Lawrence D. Cohen, and lyrics and music by the

Academy Award-winning team of Dean Pitchford (FOOTLOOSE) and Michael Gore (FAME). CARRIE THE MUSICAL seemed poised for megahit status.

But when it debuted in London with the Royal Shakespeare Company in February of 1988, fans and critics beheld a wildly uneven, highly abstract production that placed a lopsided directorial focus on the bizarre mother/daughter relationship between Carrie and Margaret White. The RSC production received decidedly mixed reviews. CARRIE nonetheless opened on Broadway without significant production changes in April of 1988. The show closed after only five very expensive performances, and its German producer promptly vanished from the scene. Beyond a flop, CARRIE, THE MUSICAL was a complete disaster, failing so spectacularly that a well-known book chronicling Broadway's worst is titled "Not Since CARRIE: Forty Years of Broadway Musical Flops".

But miracles do happen, even in a world of cheerleaders, jocks, and destructive powers of the mind. A cutting-edge CARRIE experience now awaits fans eager to relive the telekinetic terror in an all-new theatrical version of CARRIE: THE MUSICAL. Premiering in Los Angeles in March of 2015 for the first time ever, with songs reworked by the original composers and with its professional young cast directed by award-winning director Brady Schwind, this CARRIE puts the audience in the most horrifying place a CARRIE fan can imagine—a recreation of Carrie White's alma mater, Ewan Consolidated High School.

Why did CARRIE come back to life 25 years after being buried on Broadway? Partly because fans of the story and the music simply couldn't let Carrie White rest. Though the first musical attempt "was a perfect storm of bad choices about how to present the original production," according to Schwind, the musical interpretation of CARRIE stayed in the hearts and minds of the fans. "Many shows have come and gone very quickly, and been forgotten," comments Schwind, "but with CARRIE, the highs were so high and lows so low that people remembered it."

The new CARRIE musical features a stronger focus on Carrie White's evolution from victim to avenger. But, with discerning horror fans in mind, the new show offers much more. Taking its cues from its Grand Guignol grandfather SWEENEY TODD, this CARRIE is definitely not your granny's

musical theatre.

The new CARRIE musical makes use of immersive staging, which lets theatergoers lose themselves in the theatrical experience. "It's almost like—and this is not a proper analogy—but it's almost like a walk-through haunted house. We're taking over the entire building and making it over as a high school," Schwind explains. Each theatre ticket will function as a hall pass, allowing the audience to walk through Ewan High School as they follow the actors throughout the show into different locations where the action takes place. "We're building out the lobby as classrooms and whatnot," says Schwind. So rather than simply sitting through the show, "From the minute the audience arrives, they will come into Ewan High and become part of the student body experiencing the story as it unfolds."

Schwind was the first to conceive of making CARRIE an interactive experience and presented this approach to the show's writers, who were intrigued. "They are adventurous spirits and were curious to see what it would be like," he says. Schwind and his production team were also eager to introduce the show's music to a new generation of fans. "It's one of the great musical theatre scores that people don't know and have never heard," Schwind said. He felt sure an updated CARRIE would succeed. "CARRIE is such an American story about American kids doing American things, singing American pop songs with a pop score," he asserts. "It may seem like a surprising choice, but when I explain it in those terms, then it makes perfect sense."

To make this production of CARRIE a hit, the production staff had to consider what is at the heart of the story that has kept people interested in Carrie White's struggle for over 40 years.

"Horror represents the grandest of human emotions, the most epic of human stories, and that's why I think people are compelled to musicalize it," Schwind says. High school is certainly a hotbed of human angst. The experience of high school "lives within all our experiences, fantasies, and fears. That universality is what interests me," Schwind says. "We all have unresolved issues from high school. We've all been on both sides of that story. We've all been mean and the victims of meanness. Everyone writes their own history, which gives them the ultimate horror experience—the psychology of their own minds."

Though the story of CARRIE remains



the same, the show is no longer set in the America of the 1970s. "It's important to be current," Schwind says. But then the question becomes: how can Carrie White's misfortunes happen in this day and age? As part of his research for the show, Schwind visited the town of Lisbon Falls in Maine, which informed King's creation of Chamberlain, Carrie White's fictional hometown. "We saw that Lisbon Falls is unquestionably the town in CARRIE," Schwind maintains. "We found a high school and read their newsletter about the prom in the gymnasium." In a smaller school such as this, with a parent who prevents her child from learning certain truths or hearing any sex education, a story like Carrie White's "could still happen," says Schwind.

In Schwind's opinion, the CARRIE story can even be seen as something of a metaphor for the recent shootings in high schools throughout the United States. "These are children who get back, and Carrie in her own way is doing that." With emotions, hormones, and the stakes running high, adolescence is a state of mind where anything can happen. In every media, CARRIE reminds us that, as Schwind concludes, "It's scary that we have to live through high school. To revisit it is the ultimate terror."



FANTASTIC PLANETS: PAUL TOBIN'S FICTIONAL WORLDS

INTERVIEW BY HOLLY INTERLANDI

When *Famous Monsters* decided to make the foray into original comic books, hooking up with the Eisner-winning Paul Tobin was a no-brainer. With a versatile career that includes work for DC and Marvel, science fiction franchises, video game tie-ins, surreal horror, and all-ages mystery romps, Tobin boasts a no-holds-barred brilliance that has won him awards in comic books and will soon be gracing more pages of prose. We recently grilled him on everything from dialogue techniques to what artists he lives in creative symbiosis with, and it made us want to go back and reread everything from *BANDETTE* to his horror masterpiece *COLDER*.

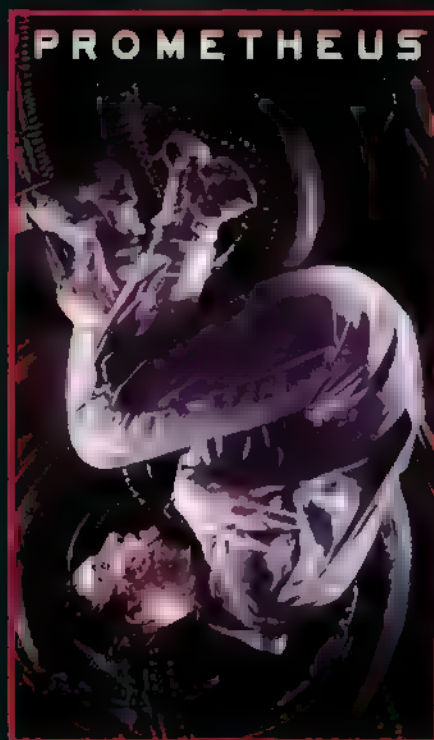


Famous Monsters. Your body of work suggests that you have a history with genre storytelling, particularly Sci-Fi. What kinds of movies and books did you grow up with, and how did they influence you?

Paul Tobin. With books and comics, I grew up with everything. My Grandma Steinberg was a huge pack rat—one of those people who have walkways through their rooms with all sorts of bizarre material stacked nearly to ceiling. She had a farm, with lots of outbuildings, and decades of accumulating material at estate and garage sales. So I burrowed into those piles and discovered a fat array of comics. Superheroes, horror, Sci-Fi, comedy, westerns, romance. I love comics, so I've never discerned by genre. Same with novels, to a certain extent, although I can't get into romance novels unless they're scandalously indecent. [laughs] I'm not much of a movie person. Growing up in the country, I rarely had a chance to watch movies as a kid, except those movies that were on television, and we all know that television movies are the Mark Of Quality. In later years I've gravitated towards quirky independent movies, like *AMELIE*, Wes Anderson movies, the Coen Brothers' films, things like that. Also Japanese and Korean horror films, where they're all about tension and atmosphere. I love me some Takashi Miike. Some of the old spaghetti westerns have the same feel, where it's all about mood.

As far as how they've influenced me, they're a part of the great whole. I think authors are influenced by every step we take, by every night at the bar with friends, by every pretty girl we flirt with, by every cat that stares at us from a window and every fear and joy we have in our hearts.

FM. You've worked on lots of franchises,



like *PREDATOR*, *FALLING SKIES*, and now *PROMETHEUS*, as well as Marvel and DC properties. How do your interpretations of these differ from wholly original stories? Is there a change in your storytelling process, or does it all come from the same place?

PT. I think it comes from the same place. One of the first things I have to do with a media property, whether it's from games, movies, television, comics or whatever, is to completely decide I don't really care about anything but my interpretation. I have to be true to how I see a character, and how I see a story. I think it's death for an author to write under another person's terms. You see a character, you find what



BANDETTE



makes the character real to you, you hold it to your chest and make your own little stories, and then you write a script to tell the world about it.

FM. How does a script differ from prose? Do you have to get into a different mode for each one?

PT. I do, actually. The transition is really fast now, but in the early days of working in both comic and prose writing, it could take me a couple days to adjust. They're

really different art forms, and the way I approach them has to be aware of that. Comics are so visual, and one thing that most non-comic writers don't understand is that a comic writer often doesn't know how an artist will be interpreting a script—what they'll be bringing to it. It can make a huge difference in how your story is perceived. One of my most favorite scripts I've ever done turned into one of the worst comics that has my name on it, for instance. And then I've had a couple so-so

scripts end up looking like I'm a genius thanks to the artist.

FM. Do you have a favorite artist to work with? Of course, I'm partial to Juan Ferreyra, but who else do you have a good rapport with?

PT. Colleen Coover (my real life wife) and Juan Ferreyra (my art-wife) really are my two favorites to work with. Both are amazing, and it's fantastic to be able to picture what they're going to do, how they're going to elevate my scripts. It puts even more desire into my scripts, from my side, because I want to match them. And Juan really goes above and beyond—I don't really like it when artists change my scripts around, *except* for Juan, because it's invariably for the better, heightening not only the visuals but the mood of my script. Really, though, I've had excellent luck with artists ever since leaving my Marvel Comics days. Not to speak badly of Marvel, though; it's just that I worked with so many artists that there were bound to be a few dingers. I also was able to work with people like Matteo Lolli and Patrick Scherberger. Lately I've been wanting to work with more women artists, so hopefully those opportunities will arise.

FM. Lines between genres like horror and science fiction can be so vague these days. Is there a dealbreaker for you? When people ask what kinds of things you write, what do you say?

PT. I consider myself a character writer. I don't care that much what genre I work in. I just want to write interesting characters. I tend to gravitate towards female characters. I've noted that my female characters are usually good people, while my men are usually lovable bastards, at best; so



it's pretty clear that I have some decent psychosis in my head. I'm good with that—there aren't any good writers without psychosis. Hell, there aren't any writers at all without psychosis. Or people, either. Possibly this is just my psychosis talking?

FM. No, I think you're right. [laughs]

PT. As far as genres blending, I think they *should* blend. Life blends. Life is a mix of genres—horror one day and romance the next. People and stories are too complex to box in by genre.

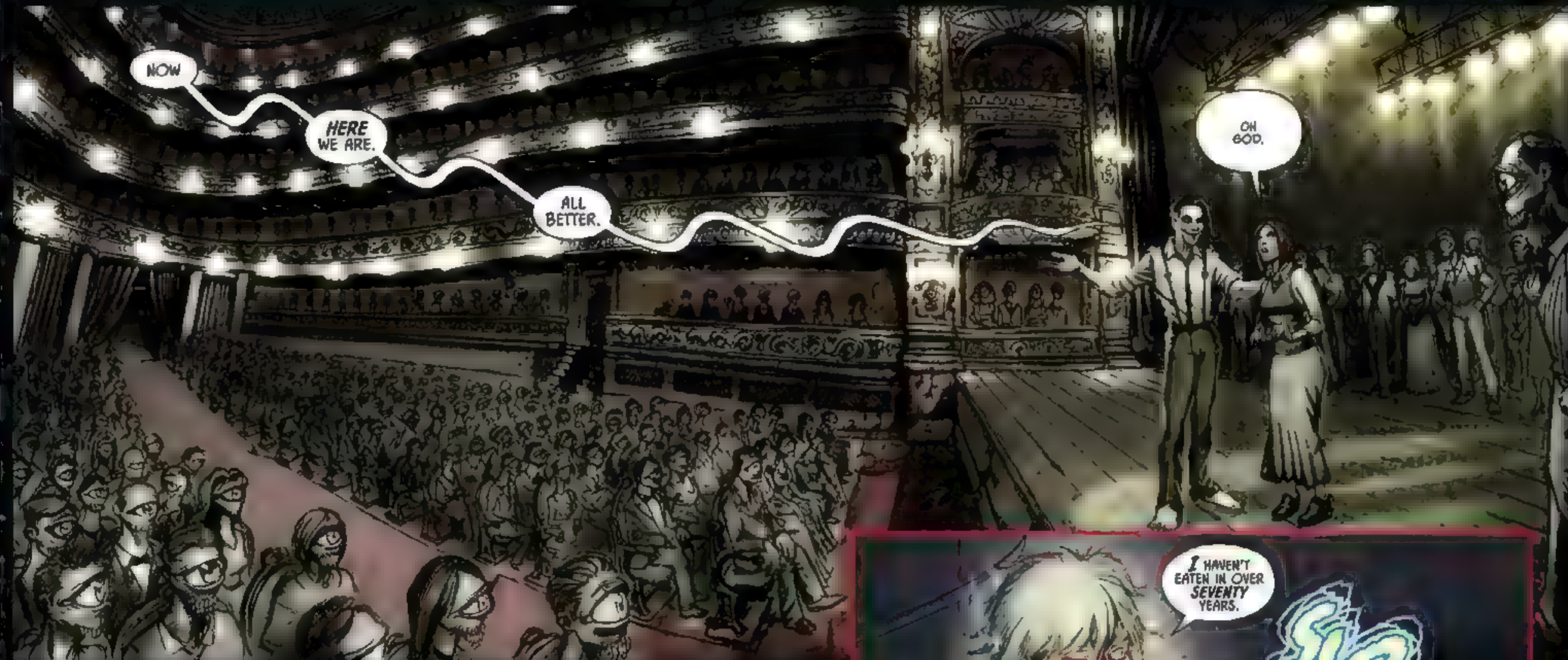
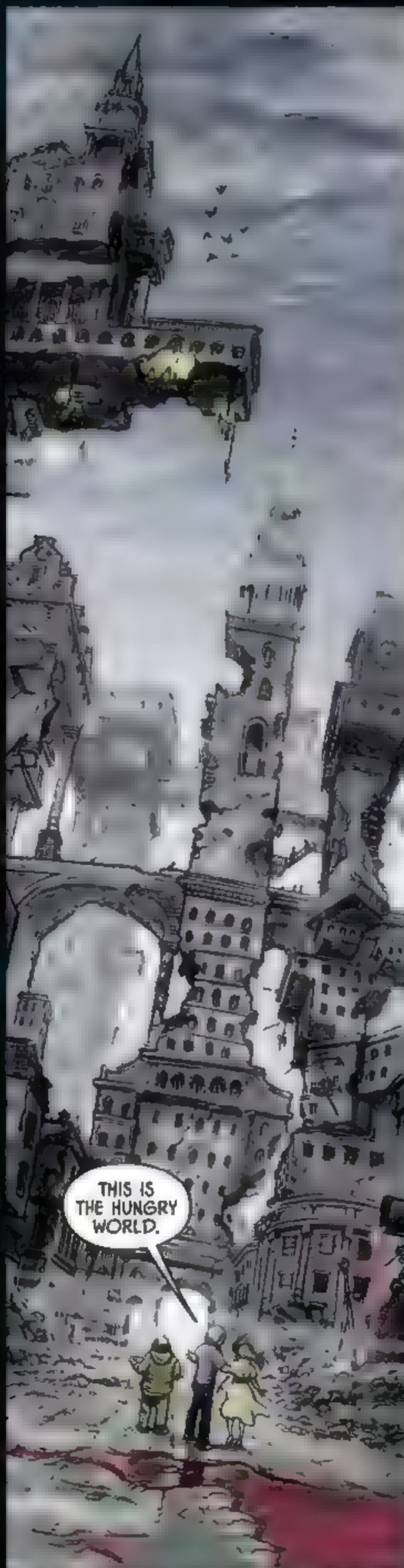
FM. Your Eisner-winning **BANDETTE** strikes me as one of those things that can't be confined to a genre. It's weirdly European and retro, but also funny, progressive, and almost absurdist, like Jacques Tardi's **EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF ADELE BLANC-SEC**. Dark Horse released the first trade this year after digital single issues. What does the future hold for **BANDETTE**? Will you continue to work with Colleen Coover on art?

PT. Colleen and I plan on doing **BANDETTE** until the sun goes supernova. It's continuing to be released in digital installments through the wonderful ComiXology app, and then when we have enough to collect, we release them as hardcovers through Dark Horse Comics. After the release of the second collection we're going to go for more structured stories, almost like how Hergé released his Tintin collections. The first of the Bandette collections of that type will be "The House of The Green Mask". And I'll continue to work with other artists on the supporting "Urchin Stories"—the 2 to 3 page stories that focus on characters besides Bandette—to fill out the world. It gives us a chance to do releases between main chapters, and gives me a chance to work with a wide range of artists I want to work with but don't have the time to commit to large-scale projects.

FM. Among the things that impress me about your writing: dialogue. It's genuinely witty, not cheesy or extreme or ridiculously offensive just to be funny. What is your process for dialogue? Do you actually say any of it out loud, take from conversations; or is it just a crapshoot?

PT. I feel bad saying it's just a crapshoot, but I suppose that's the closest to the truth. That said, it's a crapshoot that feels right to me. I listen a lot to people talking, whether at coffee shops where I'm writing,





hanging out with my friends, walking the streets, peering in windows late at night... just the usual ways writers interact with humanity... and from that, I get my feel for dialogue. The main thing I try to do is to avoid making it sound like the dialogue was written: it needs to feel spoken.

FM. The original volume of *COLDER* was nominated for an Eisner and received a lot of critical praise. Do you feel any pressure to follow up that praise with *COLDER: THE BAD SEED*?

PT. I don't really feel any pressure. Well, I should say that I don't feel any pressure beyond that of making sure that I tell the best story I can, but that's a pressure I've always felt. Somewhat keener of late, actually—I've watched so many comic book writers, some of them good friends, who have fallen into the trap of finishing scripts rather than finishing stories. It's really a different exercise: when writing is your job, you can get lazy and just essentially be punching a time clock, feeling like as long as you make a deadline, you're doing your job, but the truth is that our jobs are to make stories, not deadlines, and stories demand more thought and more heart.

FM. Well said! Were you always planning on multiple volumes for *COLDER*, or did the sequel germinate after the fact?

PT. We [Tobin and artist Juan Ferreyra] originally intended it to be a stand-alone. But we had so much fun that we decided to grow the story a bit. There's a second arc of 5 issues, then a month break, then a third and final arc of five issues.

FM. Since you're working on *PROMETHEUS* for Dark Horse, I'd like to know what you thought of the film. What, if anything, did you take from the film to write your portion of the *Prometheus* / *Aliens* / *Predator* crossover?

PT. I thought the movie was an exercise in establishing atmosphere and grandeur, which took precedence over plot and character. That shifted the movie away from areas that I consider my wheelhouse, meaning the characters, but it was interesting to watch other creators work their craft. I've been hanging out with other writers a lot of late, and writing is a constant discussion. My little gang includes a wide range of writings, like Chris Sebela, who does comics; Adam Knave, also a comic writer; Daniel Wilson, who does tech Sci-Fi novels; Andrew Shaffer and his



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Tobin's frequent collaborator Juan Ferreyra took the *COLDER* script as an opportunity to induce nightmares. The "Hungry World" is a place where your own insanity (such as social phobia, *TOP*) takes over and manifests itself into monsters. Declan Thomas and nemesis Nimble Jack (*LEFT*) are able to "feed" on the resulting madness. *COLDER* was a massive critical success, receiving an Eisner nomination for best mini-series.

odd novels like *HOW TO SURVIVE THE SHARKNADO*, and then his wife to be, Tiffany Reisz, who writes romance erotica. We have a wide range of writing styles and it's really freeing for me to talk with these people about how they go about their craft. One thing that a lot of would-be writers don't understand is that there's no "right" way to go about creating: every story is different, and every writer is different, and every writer has a different way of going about creating their stories. As far as what I took from the *PROMETHEUS* movie, what I took was the atmosphere and the omnipresent and unrelenting pressure of the *Prometheus* / *Predators* / *Aliens* franchises, where every situation feels like it's being squeezed in a vise... and then I slid my love for characterization into that.

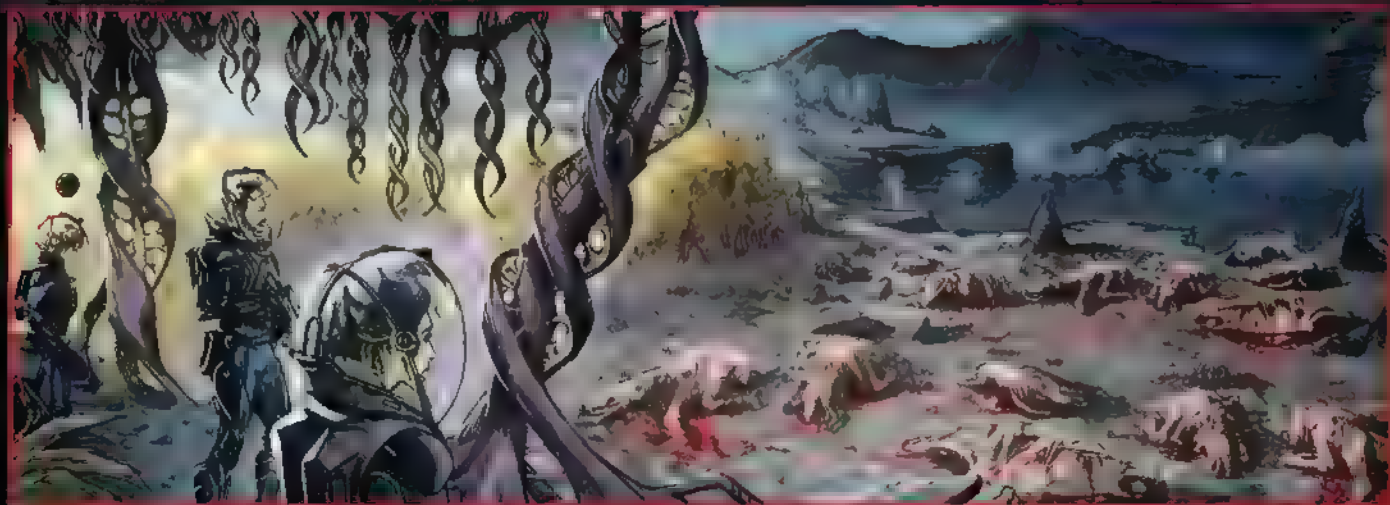
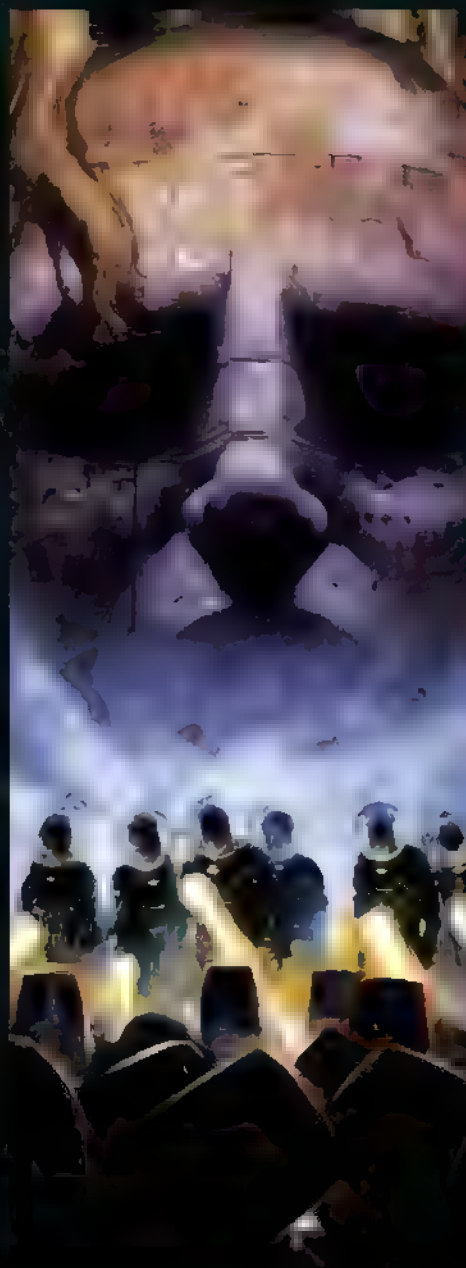
FM. I've never actually played *THE WITCHER*, but your comic reads like a standalone horror adventure. How much did you take from the game? Did you play it first?

PT. The *Witcher* games, and especially the novels, are rich with a huge range of characters, and city-states, and kings and queens and politics, but we decided that would be way too much to foist on readers who weren't familiar with the story, so we stripped it down to just the horror element and the main character, Geralt. I was definitely a fan of the game (and the prose) before I was offered the assignment. I love the game because it feels more adult in its

relationships to me. Too many RPG games treat romance and sex as another goal to be "won", whereas Geralt has casual relationships that don't lead to anything except fun between a couple of consenting adults. That makes me feel a lot better than "romancing" a woman in a game, sleeping with her, and then having a gold star getting loaded to my trophy list like I'm some snott-nosed twelve year old who thinks women are just prizes.

FM. You've also written for two gargantuan game franchises, *ANGRY BIRDS* and *PLANTS VS ZOMBIES*. How does storytelling work with a functional "fighting" game like that as opposed to a narrative game like *THE WITCHER*? Where do *Angry Birds* stories come from? **PT.** When I first started on the *Plants vs. Zombies* franchise, there was literally nothing but a game where two sides lined up against each other and then moved forward, so it was a *huge* mind-bend to turn it into stories. Luckily, the people at Popcap (who are all awesome—special shout-out to A. J. Rathbun and his wealth of books on cocktails!) just gave me all the rope I needed to turn it into an actual story, with a city, characters, and all the wackiness I could possibly wedge into a comic book page. The people at Rovio were the same with *ANGRY BIRDS*. I grew up reading *MAD* and *NATIONAL LAMPOON* and watching *MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS* and *BENNY HILL*, so my life for

Tabin claims that his work based on licensed properties—such as *PROMETHEUS* (BELOW) and *THE WITCHER* (OPPOSITE)—comes from the same personal place as any original story.






wacky and absurd humor has found a home in both these franchises.

FM. Aside from your fabulous forays into comics with FM, what's on your roster that we have to look forward to?

PT. More **BANDETTE**, some more **WITCHER**, **ANGRY BIRDS**, **PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES**, and my horror series **COLDER**. Beyond that, there are three more creator-owned projects that are moving forward and will be announced in the next few months. I want to buckle down and really start telling the stories I enjoy, full of rich characters and stories that punch readers in the throat, stomach, and groin. I want to do more straight-up graphic novels, such as my recent **I WAS THE CAT**, which has been a huge success for me and artist Benjamin Dewey. And I have my novels, now, too. My **PREPARE TO DIE!** novel has been out for a couple years, and it was such a gas that I'm continuing with prose. About 50% of my writing time is in prose, these days. I have a five book middle-grade series that begins in early 2016 from Bloomsbury, and I'm going to start shopping an urban fantasy series soon. And the **PREPARE TO DIE!** novel will eventually be expanded into a trilogy, unless I go crazy first. So you know, toss the dice on that one.



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LET'S GET LOST IN SPACE[®]



LOST ^{IN} SPACE

A group of seven people, including men and women of various ages, are posed in a futuristic, metallic interior. Most are wearing white jumpsuits with red harnesses, while one man in the center wears a blue uniform. To the right is a large, complex piece of machinery with a cylindrical body and various dials and pipes. The background shows more of the station's interior with metallic walls and structural elements.

BOLD IN CONCEPT

BRILLIANT IN EXECUTION

BY MIKE CLARK



When *LOST IN SPACE* premiered over the CBS network on Sept. 15, 1965, its outer-space setting gave the series a “wow” factor over the sitcoms, westerns, and cop shows of the time. The family adventure delivered amazing, deep-space spectacle before morphing into a colorful but juvenile program. *LOST IN SPACE* supporters point to its charismatic cast, superior production values, and fantastic hardware. Detractors point mainly to Dr. Zachary Smith. The Smith character, who started the series as a classic, snarling villain, evolved into a comedic rogue and eventually a buffoon. Whether the show would have survived without Smith on board to spark plotlines is arguable, but the series was much more than a showcase for his antics. Produced on a tight (but for its time, expensive) budget, the series’ visual look holds up rather well. *LOST IN SPACE* ran for three years (83 episodes) on CBS, ceasing production in 1968. The show has a loyal fan base and brand recognition spanning two generations. Its finer qualities are well worth remembering.



NO PLACE TO HIDE

LOST IN SPACE's creator/producer, Irwin Allen, was busy prepping his new ABC series, VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, for a fall 1964 debut. Filming on VOYAGE was barely underway when Allen began planning his next series, based on Johann David Wyss' classic tale of castaways on a tropical island, THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON. Adding a Sci-Fi twist, Allen's concept for the series was called SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON and set on a distant planet

By autumn, VOYAGE had achieved ratings success on ABC, and eventually settled into a four-year run. Meanwhile, Allen and writer Shimon Wincelberg crafted the SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON adventures and appealing characters. Allen's casting for the pilot was flawless: Former ZORRO star Guy Williams was John Robinson, stalwart expedition leader

and patriarch. June Lockhart, fresh from seven years of LASSIE, was Maureen, the loving mother of the Robinson children. Oldest daughter Judy was played by the beautiful, blonde Marta Kristen, a relative newcomer in movies and television. Shy, sensitive Penny was Angela Cartwright, who had just finished THE SOUND OF MUSIC and was a veteran of the sitcom MAKE ROOM FOR DADDY Billy Mumy, who came to the series with dozens of motion picture and TV credits played budding young scientist Will. Mark Goddard, an accomplished dramatic actor, became the ship's pilot, Major Donald West. There was a natural chemistry to the cast, who carried the drama when scripts underperformed. Everyone blended well, and you really believed that a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead were all children of John and Maureen Robinson. A touch of romance between West and Judy was suggested in the pilot but never materialized

in the series. Dictates from CBS kept affection to minimum, particularly between John and Maureen.

Shortly before filming began, SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON became LOST IN SPACE. With Allen as producer and director, production on the ambitious and expensive black & white pilot, "No Place to Hide", began in December, 1964, and was completed in late January, 1965. Production designs by William Creber were fantastic yet practical, beginning with the saucer-shaped Robinson spacecraft, the Gemini 12. The ship's circular control deck took up a minimal amount of stage space yet allowed for interior and exterior filming. Also impressive was the Robinson's transport, The Chariot, custom built on the chassis of a snow cat.





THAT'S QUITE A PERSONALITY:
It was the charismatic cast who really made **LOST IN SPACE** work, even when their co-stars were not entirely human.



Special recognition goes to the pilot's second unit team, directed by Sobey Martin. Martin and his crew traveled to California's Red Rock Canyon, where the special effects experts, Howard and Theodore Lydecker, rigged the four-foot miniature Gemini to crash land among the other-worldly rock formations. In another part of the California high desert, filming of the full-size Chariot as it cruised among the exotic Trona Pinnacles further established the eerie otherworld look of **LOST IN SPACE**.

At the pilot's New York screening, Allen was annoyed by the jovial reactions of CBS executives as the Robinson's adventures played out. This was a serious adventure! But a network order salvaged his ego. In fact, **LOST IN SPACE** was the first series CBS purchased from Fox after a long hiatus, and played a large part in Fox's rise to the top of program suppliers for all three television networks.

HOW TO MAKE A STAR

With the network order in hand, Allen and his story editors, Shimon Wincelberg and Tony Wilson, determined that the series needed an extra ingredient: a house villain. Enter Col. Zachary Smith, a member of the Alpha Control team but covertly under

orders from a mysterious foe (it's never been determined exactly who) to sabotage the mission. Allen briefly considered future **ALL IN THE FAMILY** star Carroll O'Connor for the role of Smith until his casting man, Joe D'Agosta, recommended another veteran actor who had just finished two years as the cranky hotel manager on **THE BILL DANA SHOW**. Jonathan Hains was brought to a meeting with Allen, who made a quick appraisal and said, "Make a deal. But don't pay him too much!"

The final cast member to be added was The Robot. Designing and supervising construction of The Robot was Bob Kinoshita, anointed series art director when Creber returned to his art direction duties on **VOYAGE**. Actor/stuntman Bob May was hired to operate The Robot, and series



announcer Dick Tufeld provided the Robot's voice. Kinoshita would expand the Creber-designed spaceship, rechristened the Jupiter II, into a two-story vehicle with staterooms, laboratory, Robot dock, and dining area (no mention of a restroom). Because the upper and lower decks of the Jupiter 2 were located on separate soundstages, the illusion of taking the elevator from one level to another was accomplished with a deft camera cut in the middle of the ride.

As production began in the summer of



ABOVE: Billy Mumy shakes hands with Burt Ward of BATMAN, which was filmed on the same lot as LOST IN SPACE and aired in the same television slot. Even Mumy admitted to occasionally "cheating" and changing channels.

1965. Allen decided to end each episode with a cliffhanger. The final scene would lead up to some enormous jeopardy and then freeze frame. A title slides in, saving "To be Continued Next Week..." Not only did it create excitement for the following week's outing, the cliffhanger saved production time by padding the last moments of an episode with footage repeated at the beginning of the next.

COST IN SPACE

Season One was off to a great start by using the pilot segments as the basis for the first few episodes. The launch into space, the crash, attack of the giants, and crossing a stormy sea were all seamlessly integrated with new scenes including Smith and the Robot.

After burning through the pilot footage, LOST IN SPACE settled in to a weekly reality dictated by budget. No traveling in space... the same planet set... and a different alien threat or Smith treachery. Smith, now known as "Doctor", was often

the instigator of trouble. An ongoing story thread involved threats to the Robinsons' basic survival on the planet, such as extreme changes in weather, drought, and food shortages. Season One writers were attuned to the family dynamic and featured many scenes between Prof. Robinson and Will, or Maureen and the daughters. Peter Packer, Barney Slater, William Welch, and Carey Wilbur supplied the bulk of Season One scripts with life lessons abundant in stories such as "Wish Upon A Star" (greed) and "My Friend, Mr. Nobody" (faith).

Harris quickly tired of Dr. Smith's one-note villainy, and became concerned that his character would wear out his welcome, leading to unemployment. About six episodes in, Harris began introducing comedic elements into Smith's character: laziness, deception, and cowardice. The writers picked up on it, and when producer Allen saw the shift, encouraged Harris to "do more." While Harris "did more," he did "too much more" later on. As the show's first season progressed, Will and The Robot became pals, and Smith, when

he wasn't trading the children for passage back to earth, displayed an occasional paternal affection. By season's end, stories were centered more on the trio of Will, Smith, and The Robot. It was a situation noticed and somewhat resented by the other cast members.

BEHIND THE PAPER MAGHE ROCKS

In its freshman year, LOST IN SPACE managed to make the most of the budget limitations. Costume designer Paul Zastupnevich had become an expert at building monsters out of living suits by attaching fins, fur, and latex. These costumes were modified and used back and forth between LOST IN SPACE and VOYAGE as a cost-saving measure. Dawson Palmer was often the man inside the alien costumes, making him the most recurrent non-series regular. Also providing the "wow" factor was photography on the Fox backlot, which contained cliff walls, jungles, and moat. Budget-saving sets were



one of Kinoshita's specialties: he would scavenge and recycle props from the Fox lot and frequently made use of companies in the area that sold surplus military computers and consoles. Creating a new set was often accomplished by shifting the existing paper-mache and fiberglass rock formations around and adding extra greenery. Even casual viewers, however, will note the use and re-use of props, monsters, and costumes.

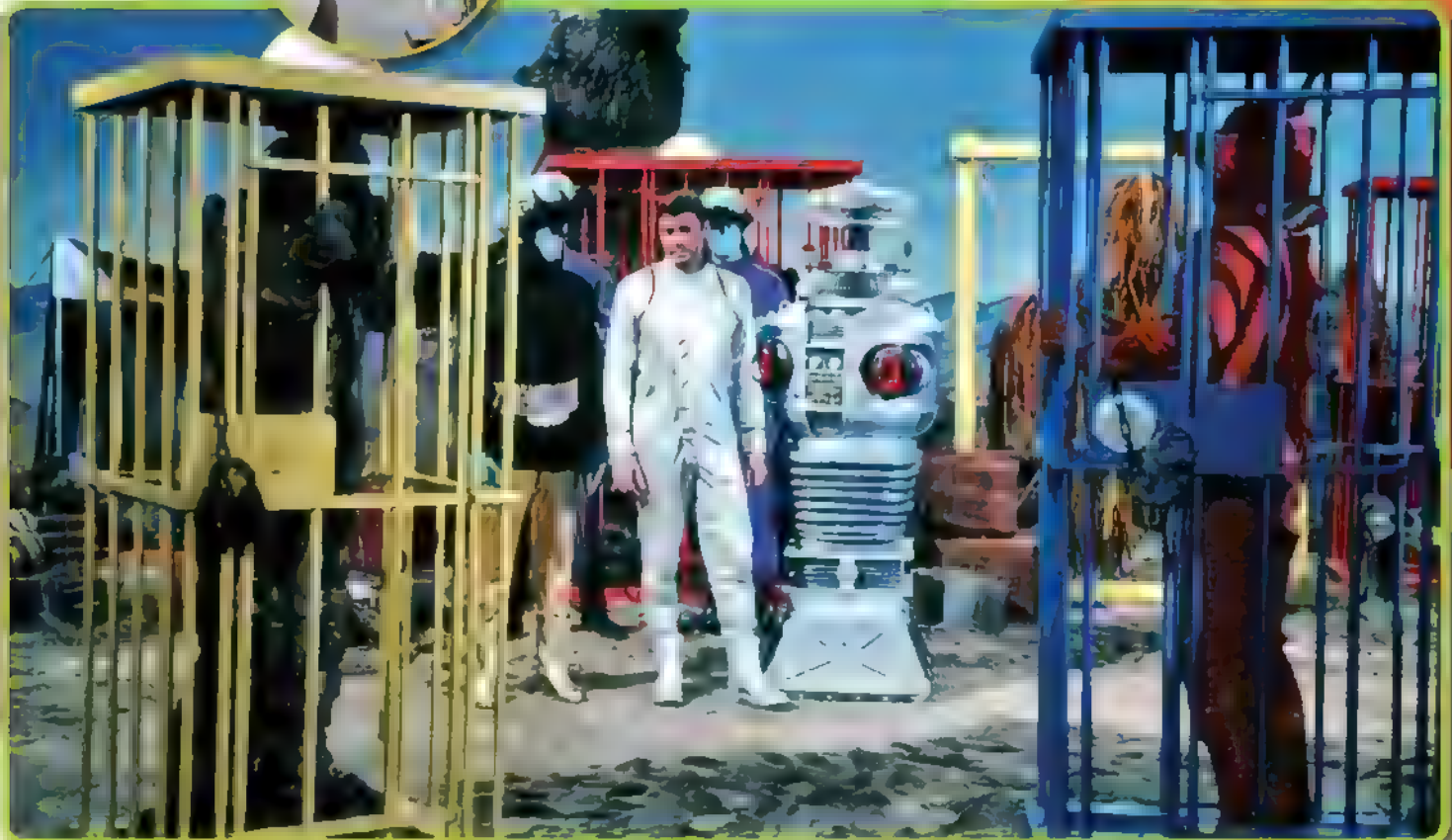
By January 1966, LOST IN SPACE was almost midway through the season when a new series made its historic debut opposite their time slot, BATMAN, starring Adam West. LOST IN SPACE took a ratings hit as BATMAN, on ABC and in color, became a phenomenon. Even Billy Mumy admitted to "switching back and forth" between his show and The Caped Crusader. Many claim that the camp antics and comedy on BATMAN later influenced LOST IN SPACE. But even with the ratings decline, LOST IN SPACE prevailed and was renewed for 1966-67.

A COLORFUL TURN

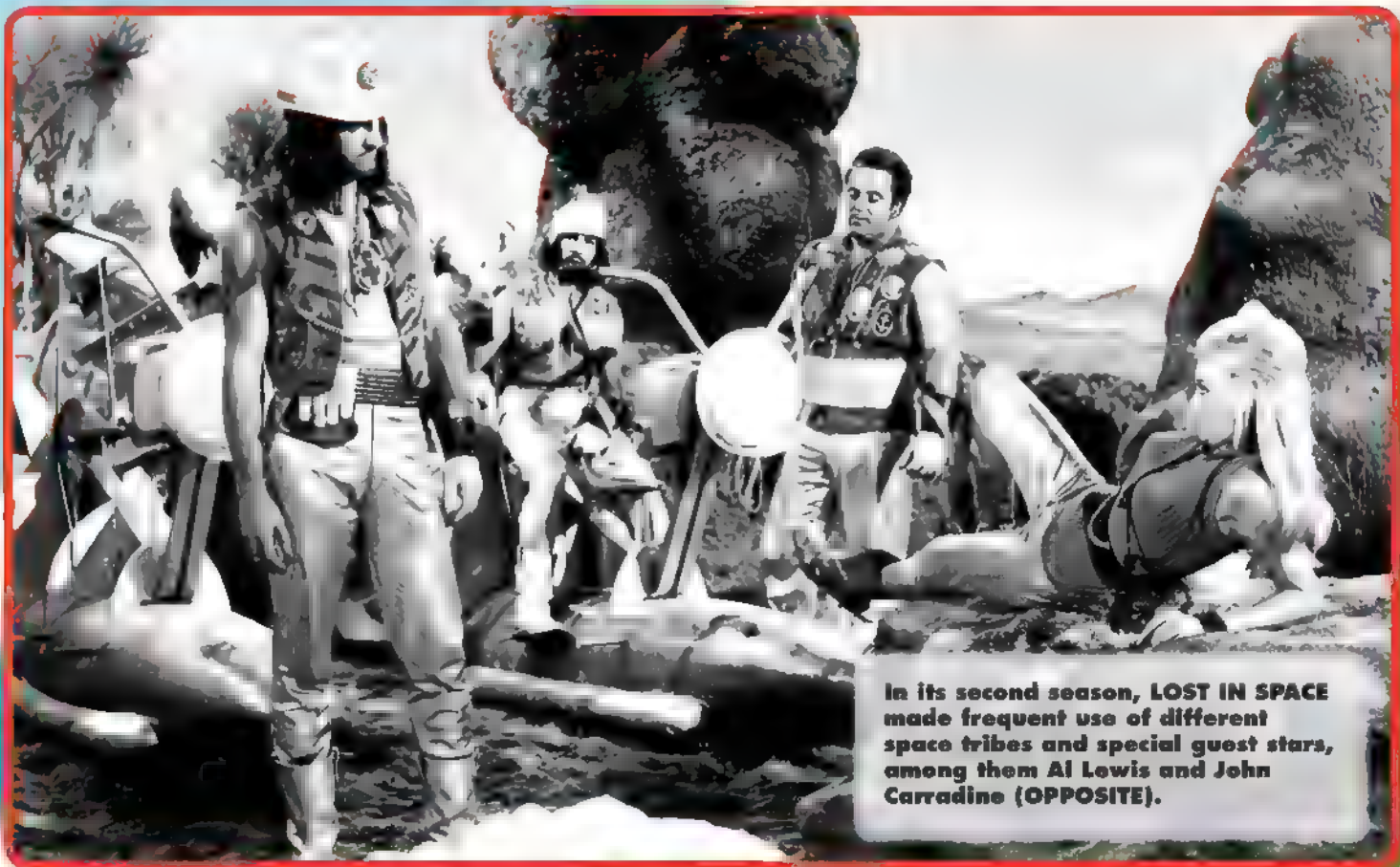
1966 was a banner year for the networks as most series would be produced in color, a situation greatly

benefitting the fans of LOST IN SPACE who were now able to enjoy the chromatic cast uniforms, alien landscapes and special effects. But color 35mm film, processing, and post-production opticals would eat into the budget. Actor's raises and inflation decimating the value of the dollar buffeted the bottom line of the expensive series. One of the budget-saving tricks was the use of "limbo" sets against black drape. Another cost saver was transporting aliens in and out of the scene with the "pop out" effect, created simply by having the surrounding cast freeze while the guest actor walks in or out of frame—removing the extra footage in editing. Often, comings and goings were masked by igniting a flash pot placed beneath the camera. Those fireworks were managed by veteran effects man Stu Moody, who was responsible for making sure his pyrotechnics did not injure the actors or cause an on-set fire.

Year 2 got off to a promising start with "Blast Off Into Space". The Robinsons realize their world is about to implode due to over-mining by Mr. Nerim (Stoher Martin). As the planet disintegrates, the Jupiter 2 is caught in the maelstrom and barely escapes. After three more episodes in space, the Jupiter 2 crash-lands for the balance of the season—and this is where







In its second season, **LOST IN SPACE** made frequent use of different space tribes and special guest stars, among them Al Lewis and John Carradine (OPPOSITE).

the real trouble begins

Repetition was setting in as writer fatigue began to show. Gone were the Season One themes of survival on an alien world. Now, juvenile storylines introduced space pirates, space circuses, space policemen, space dragons, space Vikings, and so forth. Smith's yellow-streak was bumped up considerably, until the slightest provocation would send him howling into the wings. With two shows on air and a third, *THE TIME TUNNEL*, joining the pack in September 1966, it could be argued that Allen was stretching himself and his staff too thin.

The use of guest stars increased in Season Two. Wally Cox, Fritz Feld, Malachi Throne, Ted Cassidy, Hans Conreid, Al Lewis, Francine York, and John Carradine presented a variety of interesting but harmless threats. Notably, character actor Henry Jones was cast as Smith's ne'er-do-well cousin, Jeremiah, in "The Curse of Cousin Smith." It was a not-so subtle message for Jonathan Harris, who had been requesting a raise, to settle down lest he be replaced.

Perhaps the most compelling second season installment was "The Prisoners of Space". Sequestered by a Galactic Tribunal of various alien species, the Robinsons are

compelled to testify for crimes committed during their year in space. Evidence is represented by clips from past episodes, and they all point toward the guilty party, Dr. Smith. But mostly, Season Two was a blur of familiar Zastupnevich monsters, Harris's screams, pop-in/pop-outs, and a blizzard of Dr. Smith's Robot insults.

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

John Williams' exciting new theme brought some much needed energy to the show's third year. Revamped animated titles with live inserts of the cast also gave the opening a jolt. Zastupnevich's new cast uniforms were in sync with the colorful mod styles of 1967. The metallic spacesuits of Season One had been replaced with more comfortable and visually pleasing silver lamé. An additional piece of hardware was added: The Space Pod. No exclamation was given for the lack of The Space Pod in earlier years, but like *STAR TREK*'s transporter, it provided an easier way to visit planets than landing the Jupiter 2.

The biggest improvement for Season Three was that most of the stories occurred in space, a welcome change from the earlier

planet-based episodes. Budgetary concerns were prevalent as inflation continued to nibble away at the value of the production dollar. "The Space Creature", a version of the mystery story *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*, takes almost entirely on the Jupiter 2 as Will's careless wish to be left alone results in the disappearance of his family members.

Allen opened the purse strings for location photography on "Hunter's Moon", a riff on *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME*. A generous amount of shooting at Fox's Malibu ranch (later home to *M*A*S*H*) gave this outing a vibrant, realistic look. In the Sutton Roley-directed "Anti-Matter Man", the usual studio rocks, caves, and greenery were arranged and lit to create a bizarre alternate world complete with a floating bridge between dimensions.

Misfires included "Flight Into The Future", consisting of the cast wandering around looking for each other, and "The Great Vegetable Rebellion", infamous for its silly plot of living plants, a talking carrot-man, and Smith's transformation into a giant celery. At least the animal character of "Willoughby the Llama" was cut due to cost concerns. Harris remembers asking writer Peter Packer about the script, who admitted that "He didn't have

another damn idea in his head."

Overall, Season Three of *LOST IN SPACE* was a vast improvement over year two. Ratings were respectable, and a renewal from CBS was a foregone conclusion. Behind the scenes, however, things were not looking so good. The network wanted to reduce their licensing fee for the expensive show, which would put Allen and Fox further into deficit financing. Neither Allen or CBS would blink on the cost issues, so *LOST IN SPACE* was removed from the fall schedule. The cast learned about their series cancellation while on hiatus. There was no final wrap party, and everyone went their own way.

RETURN TO EARTH

LOST IN SPACE has been in worldwide TV syndication since 1969. Home videos were good sellers in the 1980s and DVDs in the 2000s. While there was a growing call from fans for a reunion TV movie, Allen mixed the idea, even turning away a script by Bill Mumy. In the meantime, the cast, including Bob May and Dick Tufeld, became popular attractions at Sci-Fi and autograph conventions. Guy Williams passed away in 1989, putting a damper on a reunion show. Eventually Allen warmed to the idea of a *LOST IN SPACE* project and met with Jonathan Harris, then age 75, to discuss it. Harris told Allen he was probably "too late" to do a revival with the surviving cast, but should he want to pursue it, Harris was in.

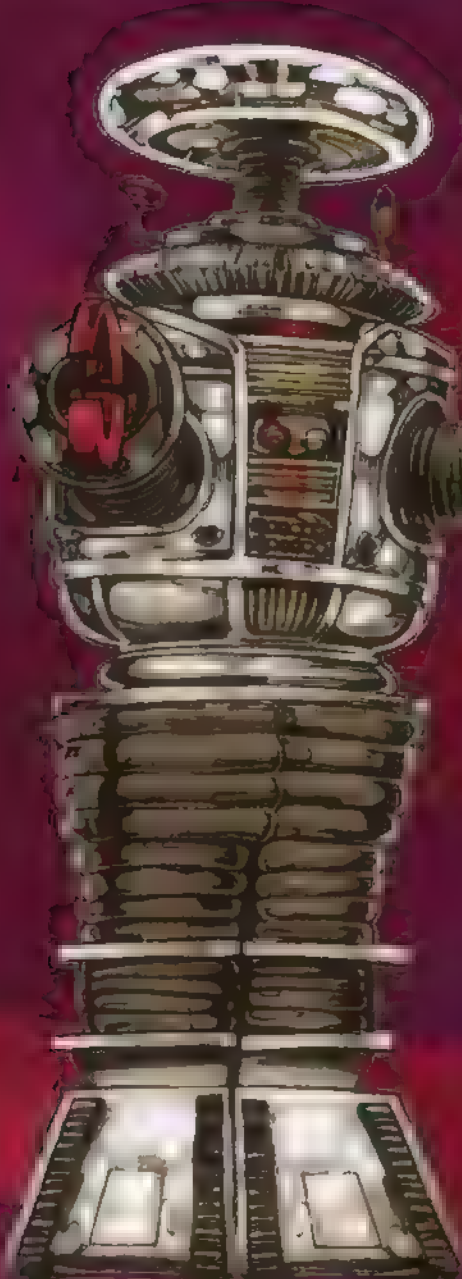
When Allen died in 1991, so did the idea of a reunion movie. In 1996, New Line Cinema licensed the property from the Allen estate for a high-budget movie that premiered in the summer of 1998. Although the movie brought increased attention to *LOST IN SPACE* and led to a flood of new merchandise based on the original series, it was not a great success.

The 1998 movie reminded fans just why the original series depended so heavily on its charismatic cast.

Two syndicated TV specials featured cast interviews and history of *LOST IN SPACE*. *THE FANTASY WORLDS OF IRWIN ALLEN* in 1995, hosted by June Lockhard and Bill Mumy, and *LOST IN SPACE FOREVER* in 1998, with actor John Larroquette and The Robot sharing hosting duties. Harris died in 2002, and a few years later, Bob May and Dick Tufeld also passed away. A new *LOST IN SPACE* pilot is planned in 2015 by Legendary Pictures, producers of the Christian Bale *BATMAN* movies. The 50th anniversary release of the original series on Blu-ray is a gift to fans who will be able to see the series in high-definition quality restorations of the original 35 mm film masters.

The legacy of *LOST IN SPACE* is in the hearts of people who enjoy family-oriented Sci-Fi adventure that's not meant to be rocket science or Shakespeare-worthy. The show lives every time the phrases "Danger, Will Robinson!", "You Bubble-Headed Booby", and "Never Fear, Smith is Here" are heard. *LOST IN SPACE* earned a spot in the canons of network television with its audacious concept, execution, and talented cast. That kind of longevity is a testament to the show's creator, Irwin Allen, who always aimed for the stars.





THE

LOST IN SPACE[®] ROBOT:

Skin of Metal,

*A Heart
of Gold*

With LOST IN SPACE sold to CBS for their fall 1965 schedule, producer Irwin Allen and his writers began plotting the show's freshman year. The pilot's characters consisted of only the Robinson family and Major West, and Allen's circle wondered if there were enough regulars to see them through 30 episodes or more. Story editor Tony Wilson suggested adding a house villain for extra drama, and so Dr. Zachary Smith joined the expedition. Since the show was set in the future and aware that merchandising was lucrative, Allen's next decision was to add a non-human to the mix: an Environmental Control Robot!

The Robot's purpose was to aid the

family in their mission by sampling and testing the environment of their destination planet, Alpha Centauri. He was integral to the first episode as a pawn of the evil Smith—it's The Robot's actions ("Destroy! Destroy!!") that send to the Jupiter 2 hurtling into hyperspace and setting in motion the LOST part of LOST IN SPACE.

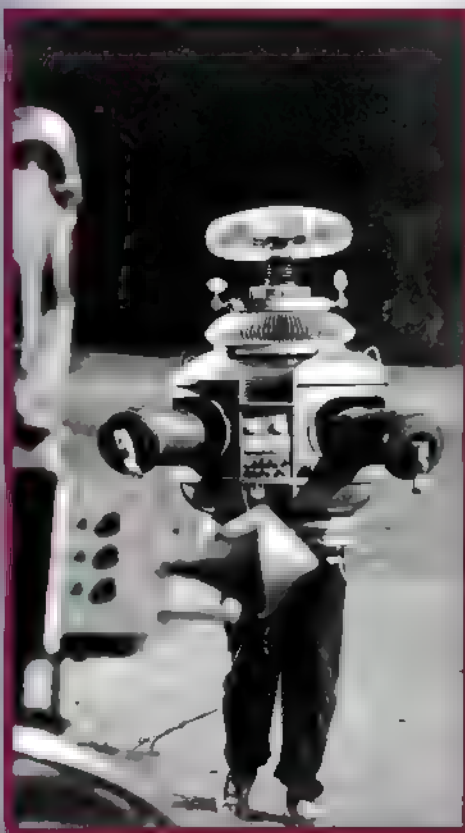
With series production starting in the summer of 1965, Allen needed someone to create The Robot from scratch. The pilot's production designer, William Creber, was returning to his duties on VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF SEA, so Allen reached into 20th Century Fox's talent pool and brought Robert Kinoshita on board as the series art director.

Kinoshita had served as production designer on a late 50's Sci-Fi series, MEN INTO SPACE, but more importantly, he was the man who finalized FORBIDDEN PLANET's 'Robby the Robot'.

Early Kinoshita sketches reveal several exotic designs before he settled in on the now-classic Robot. "It becomes a question of how you move a robot," explained Kinoshita. "Wires show up on camera, so I like to design a robot with a human inside. It also gives the robot some character." Robby The Robot was a bi-ped who had great difficulty navigating his vehicle's ramp. With that in mind, Kinoshita determined that the Robinson's Robot would have pivoting knee joints and wheels at the



USE YOUR ILLUSION: Irwin Allen gave *The Robot* such a vivid set of characteristics that it was difficult to believe there was actually a man behind the suit, which was often the point as audiences were intended to believe *The Robot* was a cutting-edge piece of tech.



base. The costume would be towed onto the set by ground-secured cables and pulleys, mostly invisible to the camera. The wheeled base was divided left/right so the operator had space for his feet, making a primitive 'walk' possible. By using a few rejected concepts from early versions of Robby, such as extending arms with claws, Kinoshita made a robot that sported a barrel chest, lighted voice-panel, and bubble-plastic brain. Kinoshita's background in industrial design fabrication gave him the knowledge of how to use blow-mold techniques to create what Dr. Smith referred to as a "bubble-headed Booby."

Robby's head and chest mechanisms had been quite noisy on the *FORBIDDEN PLANET* set, requiring costly dialogue replacement. Kinoshita limited *The Robot*'s mechanized movements to small motors that drove the audio sensors and feelers in the head and brain area (even

the series). The entire *Robot* character was designed and built in about six weeks, under Herb Cheek's construction department. Kinoshita was unhappy with the wrinkled manner in which the legs came out of the molds, but there was no time for refinements until Season Two. Final cost of *The Robot* costume: \$75,000.

The operator of this 'mechanical marvel' would have to be short, physically fit, and immune to claustrophobia, because he would be locked inside the suit during filming and could only get out with the aid of the floor crew. Allen once again proved his casting chops by hiring Bob May, an actor and stuntman who could handle the physicality required. May, who had appeared in his grandfather, 'Chic' Johnson's vaudeville-style show *HELLZAPOPPIN'*, was a skilled mime and added a great deal to the *Robot*'s

character and mobility. Witness The Robot reacting to a Dr. Smith insult by raising or lowering his bubble. To this day, it's puzzling to figure out how May turned the upper part of the suit 180 degrees to reverse direction!

May, whose face was powdered black and hidden behind The Robot's collar, was the single Robot operator (with the exception of a stuntman) during the show's three years. "I'm the only actor with his own personal sauna," he claimed. Locked in "the bucket", as May referred to the suit, left him vulnerable to practical jokes. On one occasion the crew broke for lunch, leaving May inside the costume. Smoking a cigar, May exhaled out the Robot's collar just as Irwin Allen entered the stage. Thinking that the expensive prop was about to go up in flames, Allen grabbed a fire extinguisher and was about to douse the suit when May spoke up!

LOST IN SPACE announcer Dick Tufeld ("... last week, as you recall...") was invited to audition for The Robot's voice, to the disappointment of May, who'd hoped that his reading would be used. Allen originally wanted a cultured voice for The Robot and instructed Tufeld to "keep it very proper." Tufeld did so, but it wasn't working for Allen. Seeing his opportunity slipping away, Tufeld suddenly spoke in a mechanical, robotian voice: "Warning, Warning!!" Allen immediately gave him the job, asking, "What took you so long?"

In the first episode, "The Reluctant Stowaway", The Robot's voice-light was triggered by a telegraph key mounted near Bob May's forehead. This gave the actor a headache, so the key was replaced by a small button and relocated to the left claw; you can frequently see the claw shake during dialogue as May spoke the words. Later in post production, Tufeld matched May's rhythm in the dubbing room. Tufeld's Robot voice-overs sound different from one episode to another, a result of various audio EQ filters used among the post-production mixing crew.

Over time, additional modifications were made to the outfit. A special claw was rendered to allow the Robot to hold a chess piece. When color was introduced in Season Two, The Robot's claws were painted red, the audio sensors red and yellow, and the legs remolded to a smoother appearance. A less-detailed stunt Robot costume was used in scenes where the "hero" version might be

damaged. Over the course of the series, The Robot was dismembered by a cosmic storm, zapped by an evil Robotoid (played by Robby), expanded to the size of a house, made into a statue, sucked out of the Jupiter 2 into space, dropped from a giant magnet, cut in half and levitated, and sent to a blast furnace.

The Robot became the star of LOST IN SPACE. His emerging personality and friendship with Will Robinson made him every young viewer's pal. His adversary relationship with Dr. Smith was comedy gold. The Robot's dedication in protecting the Robinsons to the point of sacrificing himself made the character beloved. Merchandise in the form of a toy Robot made by Remco and a model kit from Aurora were popular sellers for years beyond the show's life. For all his charm, The Robot never really had a name on the show. Bob Kinoshita nicknamed him "Blinky". "G.U.n.t.e.r." (General Utility Non-Theorizing Environmental Robot) was suggested by fans who noted the

labeling on The Robot's packing crate. Jonathan Harris deemed him "Clawed". But he was referred by his model number B9, in one episode, and this is the name that has stuck over the years.

With the series cancellation in 1968 the Robot suit was relegated to Fox's prop warehouse, then retrieved in 1970 and horribly modified to appear in a Saturday morning Hanna-Barbara series, MYSTERY ISLAND. Over twenty years of storage followed until The Robot was renovated by special effects maestro Greg Jein to make appearances on TV and at special events. Eventually, a replica was made and used to preserve the original aging prop. Today the hero costume is in a private collection; the stunt costume was restored and lives in Seattle at Paul Allen's Science Fiction Museum. In 2004, TV Guide ranked The Robot at #14 on their list of "25 Greatest Sci-Fi Legends". And everyone is familiar with his signature line: "Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!"





Irwin Allen wasn't the kind of movie and TV producer who dabbled in ordinary, run-of-the-mill drama. His characters were marooned in space or explored the bottom of the sea, they ran from giants or plunged a hundred stories from a burning sky scraper. Your ticket to an Irwin Allen production guaranteed fantasy, excitement, and tons of special effects.

Allen's stats are amazing: 500 TV episodes, 17 feature films, 12 Academy Award nominations, and 1 win. Prolific, dedicated, and driven, Irwin Allen once had four network series in production at the same time. And Allen's life story could easily be a story line in one of his movies.

BIG APPLE TO BIG ORANGE

Irwin Allen was born on June 12, 1916, in New York City. The youngest of four children, Allen often escaped to nearby Coney Island, the mecca of amusement parks, complete with roller coasters, funhouses, and even "a trip to the moon." But it was the circus that stirred Allen's passion for grand entertainment. The color, excitement, and danger sparked a lifelong interest in the Big Top, and certainly paid a part in his psyche when it came to making movies and television.

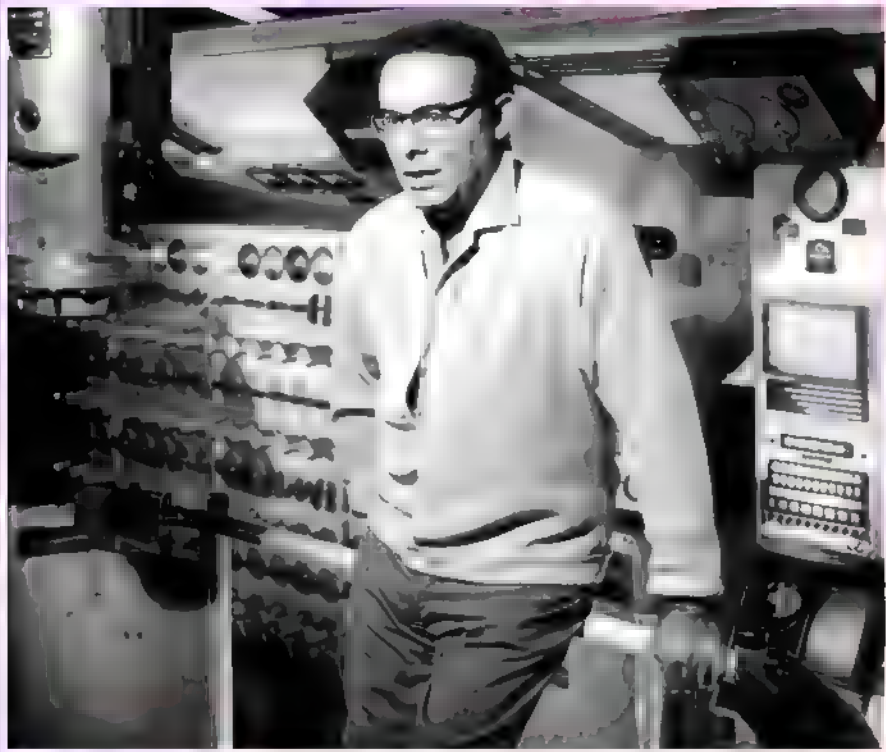
Allen attended public schools and later studied advertising and journalism at New York's City College and Columbia University. On a trip to California in the early 40s, Allen decided that Tinseltown was the place to make his mark. Over the following years his career boomed, with a syndicated

entertainment column, "Hollywood Merry-Go-Round", a radio and TV show that pioneered the celebrity panel/talk show format, and a literary agency representing prominent writers in the movie industry. In the early 50s Allen moved into feature films at RKO and line-produced four live action movies and an Oscar-winning documentary, *THE SEA AROUND US*. Another documentary, *THE ANIMAL WORLD*, used stop-motion animation courtesy of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen.

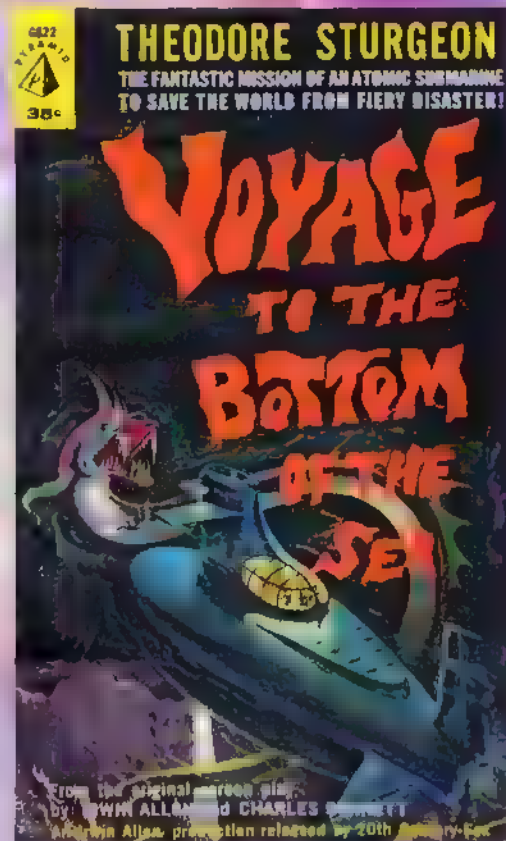
Allen's trademark strategy for success was realized in his 1956 Warner Bros. production titled *THE STORY OF MANKIND* starring Ronald Colman, Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, and Groucho Marx. Allen wrote and directed the episodic film, which jumped from one era to another. By hiring stars whose shelf life were slightly past due and using generous

amounts of stock footage, Allen was able to take a modest budget and simulate a much larger production. The template was set for the future: A-list stars (slightly faded), stock footage, and special effects would be Allen's winning formula.

THE BIG CIRCUS fulfilled Allen's lifelong passion for 3-ring extravaganzas. Starring Victor Mature, Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, and Red Buttons, *THE BIG CIRCUS* began Allen's long-running associations with its director of photography, Academy Award winner Winton Hoch, and costume designer Paul Zastupnevich. "Irwin gave loyalty and he expected loyalty. He never fired anyone," recalls Tony Habeeb, Allen's publicist. "He took care of the people who worked below the line for us, the hairdressers, the costumers. He carried many people on his own payroll between pictures and so on. Irwin was a very generous man."



VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA (BELOW) perfected the Irwin Allen (LEFT) formula of special effects, over the top scenarios, and grand set design.



THE STARS AND BEYOND

Moving to 20th Century Fox, Allen found his home. Fox provided an incredible infrastructure with the biggest sound stages, in-house effects department, and distribution. *THE LOST WORLD* (1960), starring Claude Rains, David Hedison, and Jill St. John, was his nascent film for Fox. "Irwin has tremendous enthusiasm for his projects," recalls Hedison. "He gets you excited about them, too. He takes you into his office and shows you his storyboards, models, and costume designs. You get caught up, and it's all fantastic."

Allen's screenplay for *LOST WORLD* called for dinosaurs chasing the cast and fighting each other to the death. Realizing that O'Brien's stop-motion technique could take months and cost more than he could afford, Allen had the Fox special effects department attach latex horns and scales onto Komodo dragons and baby alligators! When filmed from low angles in slow motion, the creatures appeared to have greater size and mass. It was a cheat that critics didn't appreciate, but the picture was a success, and set the stage for what would be the quintessential Irwin Allen film.

VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA had everything going for it: slightly over-the-hill A-listers, exciting special effects, a nonsensical scientific plot, and the coolest submarine ever, the Seaview. Walter

Pidgeon played the Patton-like designer of the Seaview, Admiral Nelson, whose plan to save the radiation-ravaged world was to shoot an atomic missile at the stratosphere. Captain Lee Crane (Robert Sterling) ran the ship and smooched his pretty fiancée Cathy (Barbara Eden). Frankie Avalon sang the mushy theme song and played Lt. Romano. Despite its over-the-top dramatics, *VOYAGE* was full of eye candy, and moviegoers happily went along for the ride. Contributing to the success of *VOYAGE* were Allen's hands-on promotions. "He was flamboyant and very involved in the publicity and advertising," says Habeeb. "The press and national distributors were wined and dined at screenings in Los Angeles with tours of the set and grand displays of artwork and models. Irwin was a showman... like a circus ringleader."

VOYAGE was a big and much-needed success for Fox, which was being crushed by the cost overruns of *CLEOPATRA*. Not one to rest on his laurels, Allen was already making plans for his next picture, *FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON*, and mulling a move into the world of television. "He saw the future value of television that was far in excess of the motion pictures," explains Allen's television agent, Herman Rush. "He realized a weekly series could generate more profit than one or two motion pictures per year."

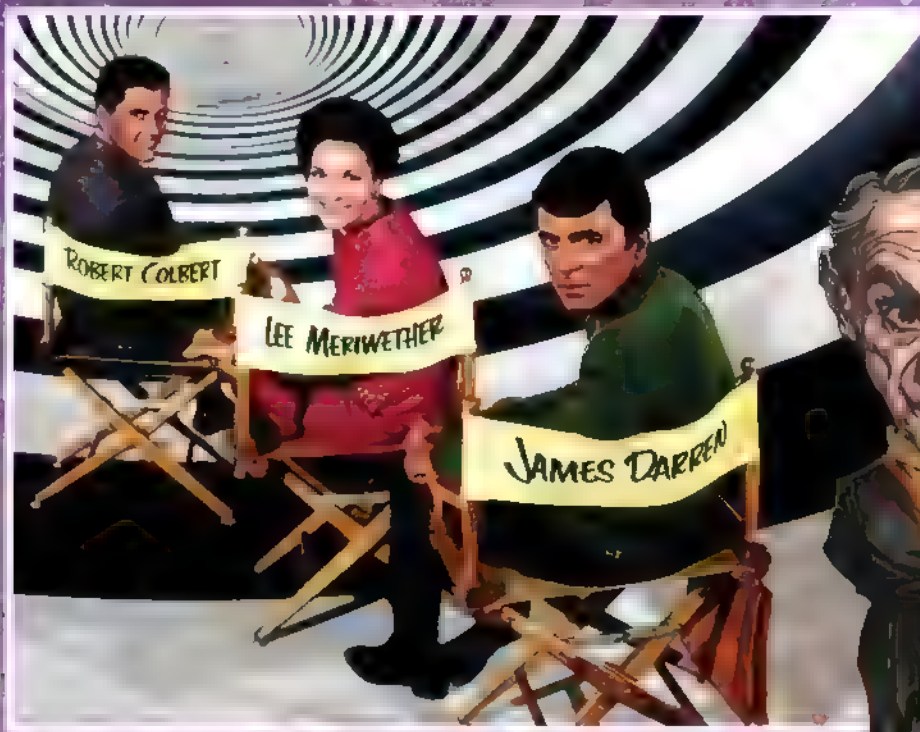
Using the sets and stock footage from the feature, a *VOYAGE* pilot was directed by

Allen, with Richard Basehart taking over the Admiral Nelson role and David Hedison coming aboard as Captain Crane. *VOYAGE* quickly established itself as a winner in ABC's 1964-65 season and eventually ran four seasons, three of them in color.

VOYAGE was barely into production when Allen began planning *LOST IN SPACE*, based on the classic tale of *THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON*. An expensive pilot led to the series being sold on CBS in 1965. The show found a loyal audience and remained on the air for three years, two of them in color.

But, like a hungry shark on the hunt, Allen never rested. "There's no such thing as an 8 hour day with him," recalls Habeeb. "Every day was a minimum of 12 hours. Those were his bachelor days, so he had no wife or children to worry about. His whole life was wrapped up in making pictures."

As if two shows weren't enough, Allen brought *THE TIME TUNNEL* to ABC in



September of 1966. An incredible time machine set designed by William Creber drew viewers into the adventures of Tony Newman (James Darren) and Doug Phillips (Robert Colbert) as they became lost "among the infinite corridors of time." The series started off well, with exciting and insightful time travel stories set in Pearl Harbor and onboard the Titanic, but the program eventually suffered the fate of other Allen productions—weak writing. The time travelers were menaced by Nero's Ghost in one outing and aliens invading the old west in another. What should have been another four year run instead didn't make it past the first year, and remained one of Allen's greatest personal disappointments.

However, Allen didn't ease up. Another series, *LAND OF THE GIANTS* was sold to ABC for the 1968 season. Because of the lead time required by the extensive (and expensive) effects, *GIANTS* went into production in 1967—making a total of four network series Allen had in the pipeline. Only Allen could manage it all, according to Herman Rush. "He had a library of three-ring notebooks with not only scripts in them, but all the dimensions for making the special effects and building the sets and so forth. Every scene in every story that he did was done by storyboard. He was an over-organized workaholic!"

Allen used a firm hand in dealing with the trials and tribulations of producing four network series. He was known to watchdog directors who were running behind

schedule to the point of ripping pages out of the shooting script. *VOYAGE's* Chief Sharkey, Terry Becker, remembers Allen granting him a raise while complaining that the extra money was costing his profit on the show. During a standoff with *LOST IN SPACE's* Jonathan Harris, Allen shut him down by proclaiming "I'm the 'magic scissors' in the sky," with final control of the edit.

1968 was the year Allen's TV kingdom was in transition. *VOYAGE* and *LOST IN SPACE* were cancelled while *LAND OF THE GIANTS* began a two-year run on ABC. The most expensive series of the time, *GIANT's* props and sets once threatened to intrude on the set of *HELLO, DOLLY*, also in production at Fox.

THE MASTER OF DISASTER

When *GIANTS* finished in 1970, Allen returned to motion pictures with the mega-successful *THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE*. It was during this time he earned the nickname "The Master of Disaster". Allen kept a presence on television with yearly TV movies such as *CITY BENEATH THE SEA*, *FIRE, FLOOD*, and *THE NIGHT THE BRIDGE FELL*. A rehash of *THE TIME TUNNEL*, *TIME TRAVELERS*, was followed by *THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN NEMO/THE AMAZING CAPT. NEMO*.

In 1975, Allen's one-season series of *THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON* aired

on ABC. This version stuck to the book and was set on a desert island. Starring Martin Milner as the father and Helen Hunt as one

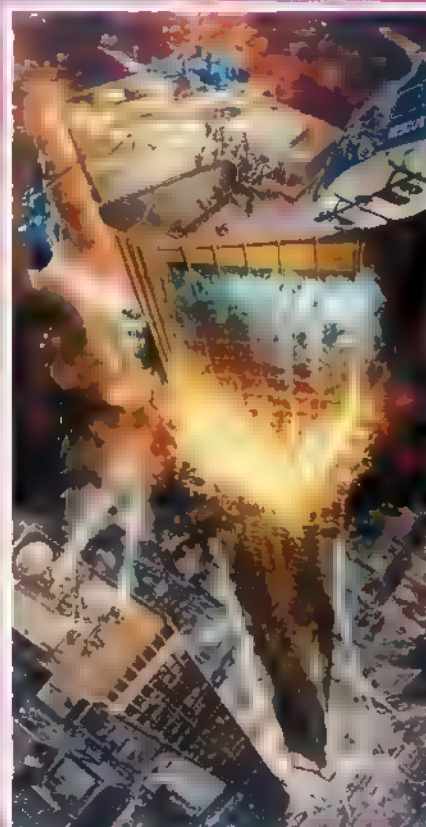
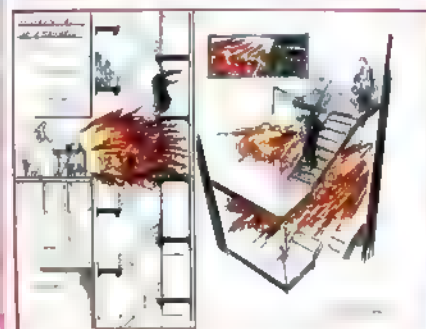
of his children, the show featured a "Dr. Smith" type in the character of Jeremiah Worth (Cameron Mitchell).

Allen's zenith as a producer was for 1974's *THE TOWERING INFERNO*, a picture so ambitious it took two studios—Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox to finance it. No cheap stock footage or faded actors on *INFERNO*—finally, Allen got his A-listers who were the biggest stars of the day. Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, and Faye Dunaway. As he had done on *POSEIDON*, Allen directed the much-lauded second unit effect scenes. Nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award, *THE TOWERING INFERNO* was a critical and commercial success that stands as Allen's crowning achievement. It was also the time that Allen gave up his bachelor card and married his long-time companion, actress Sheila Mathews.

Allen was under contract to Warner Bros. for the balance of the 1970s. *BEYOND THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE*, *THE SWARM*, and *WHEN TIME RAN OUT* were break-even box office films—not blockbusters. Allen returned to series television with a one-season effort, *CODE RED*, starring Lorne Greene. More movies of the week followed, but Allen's four hour miniseries *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* was his last



ABOVE: The casts of Irwin Allen's two biggest film productions, THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE and THE TOWERING INFERNO. RIGHT: Preliminary blueprints for an explosive INFERNO effect and the original poster artwork.



great hurrah. Boasting a large cast of stars, scores of extras in custom-made outfits, soundstage-filling sets, a musical score by Steve Allen, and special optical effects by John Dykstra. ALICE was a monumental production. "When you put together a show that has fire, floods, haunted houses, storms, and nightmares, plus a hundred other special effects that we've been doing all these years, I would say everything was difficult," said Allen during the shoot. "But ALICE may be the best picture I've ever made. Of course I'm a little biased, but it turned out marvelously well."

A modest courtroom TV movie of the week, OUTRAGE, starring Robert Preston, was Allen's final production. He was considering a new version of LOST IN SPACE when his health failed and he died on November 2, 1991.

Irwin Allen's legacy continues, with audiences enjoying his TV series and movies 50 years after their creation. New versions of shows based on his concepts, a non-stop flow of toys and DVDs, and a secure spot in pop culture keep the name Irwin Allen and his properties relevant. Not bad for a kid from New York who loved the circus and eventually became his own ringmaster.



BILL mummy:

Black Hole Son

Q N GROWING UP ON SET

Although I was a "seasoned professional" at the age of ten and had been working half my life by then, I was genuinely excited about *LOST IN SPACE* when the pilot was offered to me. A science fiction action-adventure show was exactly what I'd wanted to get into television to do in the first place. Watching Guy Williams as Zorro as a little 4 year old made me want to get inside the TV and be an action hero. So, working as Guy's son and acting as a boy genius astronaut in the future—experiencing deep space, other worlds, and aliens—was really cool.

To make things even sweeter, we filmed the entire series at 20th Century Fox studios in West Los Angeles, which was walking distance from my house in Cheviot Hills. I actually rode my purple Schwinn Stingray to the studio many times when going to school there during hiatus time. I still have that bike.

School at the studio was great when Angela and I weren't filming. There was a permanent school room on the lot, and Frances Klampf

was the Fox studio teacher. She'd been there since Shirley Temple first started making films. Frances was a sweet, warm, good-natured human and a very qualified teacher who encouraged our creativity instead of force-feeding us the curriculums our public schools were using.

But when we were filming, Ange and I had to get our school requirements done in increments, with a different teacher, in a small trailer outside the sound stages. Going to school when I was working all the time was the only thing I disliked. As Will Robinson, I carried a heavy amount of on-camera work, which I absolutely loved, but the child labor laws decreed that a minor has to get three hours of schooling in per day by four in the afternoon. It can be compiled of twenty-minute sessions. So we would block and rehearse a scene on the stage; then, when it was being lit, I would be rushed off the stage into the school trailer outside, and I'd have to switch my brain from thinking about my lines and the action on set and force myself to try and focus on Geography or Math or History, while the second assistant director would

stand outside the trailer with a stopwatch. As soon as twenty minutes was up, he'd take me out of school and bring me back on set. That was always a drag, shifting gears in my brain so often. I really just wanted to be on the set. It could've been easier on the teachers, too. I sometimes gave them a bit of a hard time. But in the long run, I got a decent education and had a blast working on the series.

Q ON HIS FELLOW LOST IN SPACE ACTORS

I think that because I was at such an impressionable age when we made *LOST IN SPACE*—ten when we started the pilot and fourteen when we stopped filming—that the weight of the imprint on relationships that I formed with the rest of the cast has stuck with me dramatically over the years. I love those people like family. And all in different ways.

Guy [Williams] was really something to see. He made a very powerful impression. He was charming and smart and bold and strong. The only thing I regret about not making the 1983 *FAMILY FEUD* reunion was that I could've hung with Guy again, and I never did.

June [Lockhart] is one of the most energetic, intelligent, and interesting people I've ever known. When we filmed in the 60s, she would always get Angela and me to play word games in between takes—Password, Scrabble, etc. She kept our young fertile brains busy. And June has always been a true rock 'n' roller. She kept the connections between the cast going at the beginning, and I think she's an amazing person. She's very involved with a lot of projects and she knows how to have fun.

Mark [Goddard] is like an older brother to me, but sometimes I feel like I'm an



ABOVE: No, you're not seeing double—that is indeed Billy Mumy in full Dr. Smith makeup by John Chambers (*PLANET OF THE APES*). **RIGHT:** Billy Mumy and co-star Mark Goddard, and older brother-like figure, cruise around the lot.



ABOVE: GIVE MOMMA A KISS... John Chambers looks on as Billy Mumy's mother tries to get past the makeup. **OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP:** The *LOST IN SPACE* cast reunion on *FAMILY FEUD* that Bill was unable to attend, with other casts from classic shows like *BATMAN*, *GILLIGAN'S ISLAND*, and *THE BRADY BUNCH*; Billy Mumy, a lifelong musician; the cover to the Bill Mumy *LOST IN SPACE* comic book; the *LIS* cast checks out their four-colored adventures.

older brother to him. My mother always called Mark her "second son"; she loved him and thought he was goofy as can be. And he is! Mark and I got into some pretty wild off-set adventures back in the day. Once in a while my mom would let us go to lunch off the lot, just me and Mark, in his little dark blue Fiat convertible. I felt like the Kato to his Green Hornet. We had some good times. Mark has dedicated decades of his life to teaching kids who had difficulties. Gotta salute him for that.

Marta Kristen is the sweetest gal ever. So spiritual and giving and beautiful, inside and out. Marta had a tough time during the filming of the series; she was in a difficult marriage and the studio was a pleasant escape for her. She turned me on to some great music, and we used to sing and harmonize together often. I always brought my guitar with me.

Ange [Angela Cartwright] and I had a special connection when we filmed the series together that eventually turned into

young romance and then back to special connection. Back in the days of the show, we were super close. Went to lunch together with our mothers all the time. She and I discovered cool secrets that the then gigantic 20th Century Fox lot would reveal to only those who were willing to seek deeply... like the labyrinth of tunnels that run underneath the studio!

Bobby May worked so hard inside the robot suit. Very few people could handle something that claustrophobic and dangerous, but Bobby loved it. He was happy as a clam inside the robot. He was almost overly enthusiastic most the time. His contribution to the series is huge. He gave that prop real character. He memorized a ton of dialogue and delivered it consistently. Although the Robot's voice was rerecorded by the great Dick Tufeld, Bobby was really the "Robot" to me.

And last but certainly not least, "Himself" Jonathan Harris. What can I say? Jonathan joined us and singlehandedly

changed the tone of the entire series. His presence was so strong and his acting senses so finely in tune with what would work to serve his role. I loved working opposite Jonathan. We had undeniable chemistry together. With Bobby there, we were the Three Musketeers or the Three Stooges.

Thanks also go to Kevin Burns, who brought the cast back together to do little promos and to go to lunch in the studio commissary every few months just for the fun of it. That was very generous and cool of him. Kevin gave us pristine copies of all the shows and found the best source negatives for promotional photographs. He's been the great hero regarding behind the scenes *LOST IN SPACE* energy for twenty-five years now. And through Kevin, my wife Eileen and I became close with Jonathan and his wife of sixty-four years, Gertrude, close to thirty years after we wrapped the series! Besides attending celebrity events together, he and I also worked together again several times, in animation and on camera, and



I treasure those experiences just as much as I do our times on the LOST IN SPACE sets. Jonathan was great. I hear his advice in my head often.

Q & N COMIC BOOK TIE-INS

I started writing comic books for Marvel in 1986, and I have written scores of comic books for DC and other publishers since. Besides being a co-creator of Comet Man, The Dreamwalker, and Trypton the Acid Dog, I wrote stories featuring Spider-Man, Hulk, the Fantastic Four, Nick Fury, the original STAR TREK cast, Aquaman, The Spectre, Green Lantern, The Flash, Clive Barker's HELLRAISER, and others.

For years, both Marvel and DC had tried to secure the comic book rights to LOST IN SPACE with the intention of my writing it. But they were unsuccessful in acquiring the license. So in the early 90s, when Dave Campiti and Innovation Comics told me they had gotten the rights, I didn't even believe them! But they had, and they were about to publish the first issue. I came on board as a creative consultant, and by Issue 3, I was pretty much

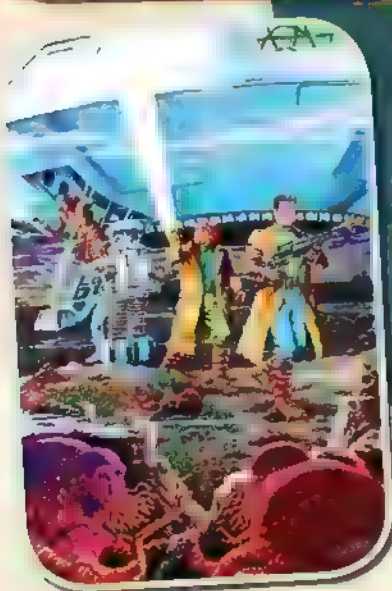
writing the series. I even scripted a two-issue story plotted with Kevin Burns.

For the second year of the book, I wanted to tell one big story that truly advanced the LOST IN SPACE saga as the fans knew it. I wanted to get them to their original destination, Alpha Centauri, and then separate them into splinter groups with great hardships over the course of the year to tell one big, multi-arc'd, uplifting family story. LOST IN SPACE: VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SOUL was collected as a 360 page graphic novel with a forward by Stan Lee. Sadly, it is now out of print.

Q & N CONVENTIONS AND FANDOM

I've been a guest at Sci-Fi and comic book conventions since the late 70s, but the "Golden Age" of conventions for me was the 90s. Big, full-cast LOST IN SPACE reunion appearances. Plus, I was a regular on BABYLON 5 for five years, and that was a huge success. I don't enjoy traveling around in airplanes anymore, though. It's become such a hassle. I rarely attend conventions these days.

Angela and I have collaborated on a fantasy novel together, ON PURPOSE, coming your way quite soon. And I hope folks will check out my music!





DANGER, JOHNNY WILLIAMS!

How the Music of STAR WARS and a variety of Other Crazy stuff—Got its start in the Background of LOST IN SPACE

by Jeff Bond

W



with an epic brass theme in "The Hungry Planet" (episode 10 of season 1). "The Hungry Planet" is a story of a man who is stranded on a planet and must survive. But a much more intimate episode, "My Friend Nobody," in season 2, features a two-part

episode of music for the series. His siren-like music is heard as an invisible creature ascends into the heavens. Williams' music for "My Friend Nobody" works like his TV-movie score JANE EYRE and his gothic DRACULA.

IN SPACE a distinctive musical character. Williams' music for the first season would continue to be tracked into numerous episodes.

In Season Three, John Williams returned to rewrite the show's main title music, and although the show had become increasingly adventurous, the season main title was more adventurous

and prescient than his quirky first season theme. After that, STAR TREK's music for some of LOST IN SPACE's

episodes. "Junkyard of Space" was a stand-alone story, but it was a ruffian junkman intent on tearing apart the planet and the Robot for scrap metal. Allen's sly commentary on the show that had failed to support his show.

It was also very rare for the last episode of a TV show's season to get an

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FINDING THE SPACE FOR **LOST IN SPACE**

COLLECTING MEMORABILIA
WITH ROBERT VANDERPOOL



Famous Monsters. What was it that first drew you to LOST IN SPACE?

Robert Vanderpool. It was something I grew up with. It was a very unique show. It had so much flavor, personality, adventure, family values, cliffhangers every week... great special effects. The music by John Williams added a punch to it. And I loved the characters.

FM. Did you have a favorite?

RV. They're all different, but I think Jonathan Harris made the show. What I





liked about him was that he created this character [Dr. Smith], and every week he did something different and unique that made you want to watch him more. One minute you could hate him, and the next you could cry over what he felt or how he reacted. He was just very versatile.

FM. From my understanding, when LOST IN SPACE first came out, there wasn't a lot of merchandise to go with it.

RV. No, there wasn't. It was just junk, a lot of cheap marketing. They would take a toy that was used for something else, plant some nice box art on it, and call it a LOST IN SPACE toy. It was kind of a shame. Take the LOST IN SPACE 3D board game, which had nothing to do with the show. It was poorly made, cardboard; you could put it together maybe once before it ripped.

FM. What other things were there at the very beginning?

RV. Aurora did their models of the Robot, the Chariot, and Cyclops. Aurora considered doing a Jupiter 2 but then decided against it because they didn't think the design was very exciting and that kids wouldn't want to buy it. That's part of why the Japanese did two different versions of Jupiter 2 that were never released in this country. They'd bring a lot of money in today if you could even find them.

FM. Despite the lack of merchandising in the United States, what was happening overseas?

RV. LOST IN SPACE was very popular in

certain countries. Even today in Australia, it airs in prime time. It's never been taken off the air, even after all these years. The Japanese, in my opinion, did the most famous and valuable collectibles. The stuff they made was very limited, but the artwork was my favorite. Just fabulous work. They did two record vinyl books, they did several comic books with really good artwork. The most valuable toy, which I haven't ever actually seen, was the Robot—they called him "Friday" in Japan—as a little remote controlled toy. It's one of the most sought after items. Hopefully some day it'll pop up! The remote controlled Chariot was also very valuable. I actually had one, but it was not in the best condition. It's really hard to put a value on a lot of it because it's so rare.

FM. Were the overseas collectibles licensed?

RV. They said it was licensed in that country, but never this country. I don't know what the license agreement was, but I guess they couldn't sell it outside of that country. I know that Brazil does their own marketing, and Australia, and there's a toy company right now that's been producing LOST IN SPACE stuff in Argentina, although their toys aren't particularly high quality—they'll do things like metal trading cards, rings, spinning tops, yo-yos.

FM. The high tech Japanese toys—were they coming out concurrent with the show?

RV. Yeah, 1966.

FM. How long did it take for you, for fans

of the show, to find out that these things existed?

RV. If it weren't for the internet, I probably wouldn't know that any of this stuff existed. But I've found some toy collectors and sellers, especially in Japan, that are looking for new stuff all the time, and once in a while something will pop up that I've never seen before. And that's what makes collecting special—you may not see something for a year, and then all of a sudden, there it is! It's amazing what is still out there. I bought these metal Coke





tops that go on Coke bottles with pictures of the LOST IN SPACE characters. I have six of them, and there's also a Dr. Smith and a Robot, but it's the first time anybody I know has even seen them.

FM. So even decades after the fact, there are still "new" things that people like yourself are discovering?

RV. My feeling is that if it weren't for the fanbase, there wouldn't be much of anything. It's the fans who have made a lot of the stuff that's out there today. The movie in 1998 kicked some of that up too, as far as merchandising the older series. But for many years, throughout the 70s, 80s, and 90s, there was nothing.

FM. Was collecting something you always did, or did you say to yourself one day, hey, I have a lot of LOST IN SPACE stuff. This is going to be a *thing*?

RV. Well, I was always a fan of the show, but I didn't know where to get toys at the time. I went to some toy shows and didn't see anything. So somebody told me to get a computer, get online, and check eBay to see what was out there. I just started buying anything and everything as quickly as I could. I was so excited to have a means of buying stuff. Some people started to hate me because I would pay whatever it took and work very hard



to obtain some of these items. When they got the license for Icon to produce a life-sized Robot, I was the third person to buy it, but I only got the head and the leg before the company went out of business. Then later on, a friend of mine who used to work for that company helped me get the Robot completed. I'm one of only seven or eight people to have it. It's my most prized item, but it was very painful to obtain. There were a lot of people who paid even more money than I did and never got anything at all.

FM. What year would you say that you began collecting in earnest?

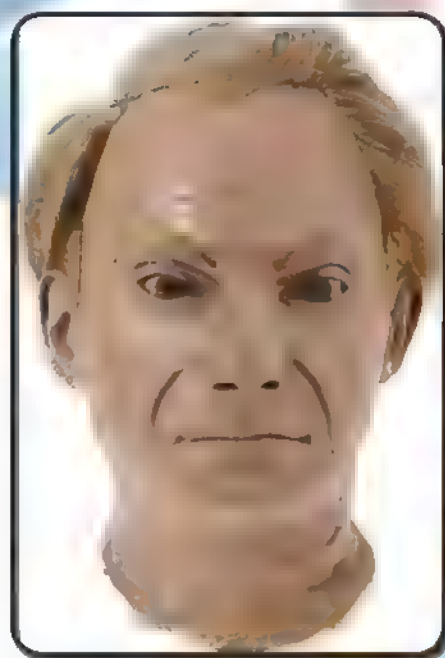
RV. I've been a buyer now for about fifteen years.

FM. And in fifteen years, how many pieces is your collection up to?

RV. Thousands of pieces.

FM. And that's not just LOST IN SPACE, but Irwin Allen properties in general?

RV. Well, the other shows, like TIME TUNNEL, have very little in the way of toys. I have everything I know of from LAND OF THE GIANTS. VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA was another show that they did very little merchandising with. Of the four shows, LOST IN SPACE was the most marketable because they could license so many different things from the show. THE TIME TUNNEL, for example—what could you really market on that show that would be exciting to own, as a kid? I mean, they never even did a lunch box for it. They did the other three, but never TIME TUNNEL, which is a shame.



FM. You say you've made a lot of connections. Have you found overall that this has been a positive experience in a friendly network of collectors?

RV. Oh yes! I get hundreds of emails a week. That's one reason I put a website together. I had no experience with websites, but a friend of mine said I should share my stuff on the internet. It all started with a guy who had a website called *whatcollect.com*. It was a website where people could post their collections for free. I wasn't really interested at first, but someone helped me set it up, and once I put it up, it turned out to be the most popular part of the whole

site! I had almost ten thousand pictures. Then the website was going to be shut down, and they had no backup on anything, so it took me and another guy a whole week to go in and save every image and every text file. We ended up saving them all. My fingers were so raw from typing by the end I couldn't even use a key board

A friend of mine who ran one of the first LOST IN SPACE websites, "Lost in Cyberspace", helped me put my own website together. We've actually become the only site on collecting; the rest are all defunct. There's nobody doing anything because I've already done it all—the references, the material, the pictures. I actually started writing a book, but I realized about a year into the project that by

the time I got done with this book it would be obsolete and outdated, considering the rate at which I was buying everything. So I decided to just continue the website

FM. A lot of people have their collections, but you take the time to update your site, to keep it current, to keep it user-friendly. What kind of maintenance do you put into everything?

RV. You have no idea. I was on dial-up until recently. Now I'm on a wireless service. But I would sit here for hours just uploading files. It's not just putting a picture up, either—it's finding all the information to go with it. Next month I'm going to go up to the Hollywood archives in LA to obtain a lot of LOST IN SPACE pictures for my site. I'm at the point now

that all my resource material is drained. The amount of money I've invested in over the years, not just for my collection but for reference material for my website... it's very costly. And I've never made a penny off of any of it.

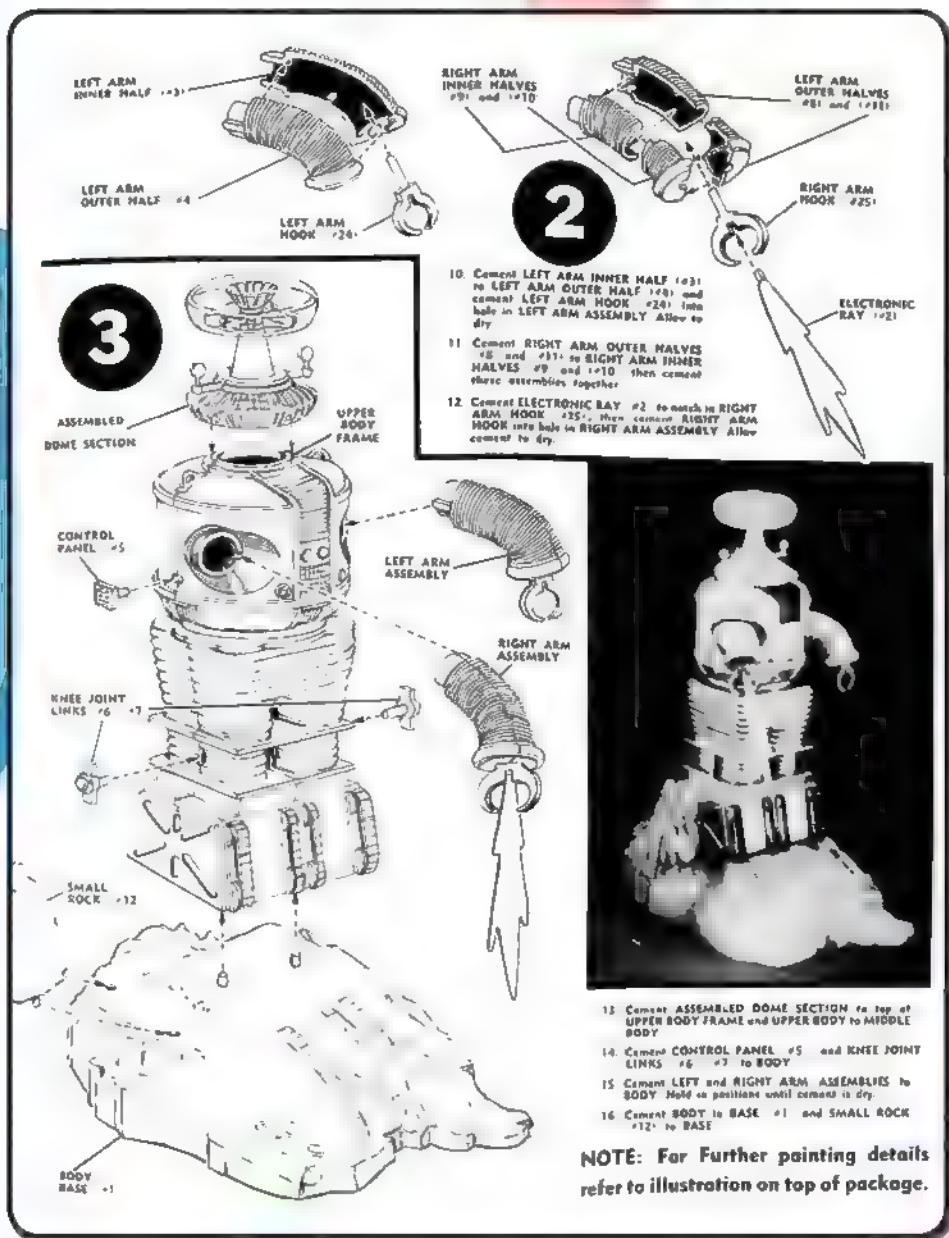
FM. What are your future plans for collecting?

RV. Just keep going on at what I'm doing. The only problem I have is that I'm running out of room. I have it in storage. I have it all over the house; I have it in the garage, in the basement... there's going to be a time when I have to sell some of my stuff just to make more room. I would love to have an actual museum someday so people could come and see it all.

FM. Why is it important for you to share your collection with others?

RV. It brings people memories! There are collectors who keep it to themselves, but for me, part of the fun is in sharing it. Every piece I have has a story to it. I've had custom pieces made for me that are one of a kind. I couldn't even put a dollar amount on this stuff. It's priceless. Just one person can keep these things alive for people's enjoyment.

View Mr. Vanderpool's collection at uncleodiestcollectibles.com



MY LOST IN SPACE[®] ODYSSEY

BY KEVIN BURNS



I was a fan of LOST IN SPACE as a kid—and even though I grew up in Upstate New York, I had a personal connection to the show. My neighbor and playmate, Nancy Wilbur, was the daughter of one of the writers (Carey Wilber). Nancy would go visit her father in California while the show was on. She would talk about going on the set and meeting everybody: “There’s a man inside the Robot! His name is Bobby May, and he’s my friend,” she would boast. (Believe it or not, it was a big deal to know there was a guy in the Robot. Series creator, Irwin Allen, wanted everyone to think the Robot was real. That’s why neither Bob May nor Dick Tufeld ever received screen credit.)

In 1989, just after I started working for Twentieth Century Fox Television, a good friend of mine named Bob Borowski sent me a letter that basically became my LOST IN SPACE “to-do” list. *Who has the merchandising rights?* Bob demanded

Call Irwin Allen. Call Billy Mumy. Find the Robot. Luckily, at the time, I was in marketing and promotion for the syndication division—the only part of the entire studio that would have had anything to do with LOST IN SPACE.

As far as merchandising rights, I called the VP of licensing at Fox. He told me Fox had no rights—but that Irwin Allen did. I then got up the nerve to call Irwin Allen at his offices at the Burbank Studios (now the Warner Bros. lot). Irwin was very polite. I actually thought he was a bit tickled to get a call from a young executive at Fox who actually knew—and respected—who he was. I made up some excuse about needing to know where we should be directing fan mail, but Irwin saw right through me. In fact, he even invited me to lunch (which he became far too ill to have, as it turned out.)

I next got Bill’s phone number from a mutual friend and invited him to come to

my office and meet with me. He was very nice, but pretty reserved. You could tell he was like, “What does *this* guy want?” Then he noticed that I had a small Pez collection on my desk, and he went nuts. “You have Batman Pez? With the soft head?” “And you have Joker... and Penguin?”

I gave Bill (not “Billy”, by the way... he hates that) my Batman Pez—along with the Joker and Penguin Pez—and we became best friends.

Outside of our meeting, I really had no agenda. I really just wanted to brainstorm a few ideas I had about promoting the show in hopes of bringing it back—either as a movie or a television series. Bill was happy to brainstorm, too. He admitted that he loved being Will Robinson—who he saw as a combination of scientific genius and superhero—and had lots of ideas. He’d even written his own screenplay for a LOST IN SPACE reunion movie. Unfortunately, Irwin

Allen wasn't interested—and, as it turned out, neither were my colleagues at Fox.

You see, television executives are notorious for having virtually no imagination, and they would rather die than take risks. In meeting after meeting at Fox I would beg my colleagues to consider doing something with *LOST IN SPACE*, only to have them mock me with, "That was just a stupid kiddie show," or "It wasn't as good as *Star Trek*."

On February 14th, 1998 (Valentine's Day), I received a call from Fernando Laval, one of my colleagues at the studio "You know that robot you've been looking for?" My heart stopped. "It's over on Stage 3. Do you want to come over and look at it?"

I raced over to the enormous concrete soundstage. It had been built in the 1920s as one of the very first of its kind for the production of sound films. Now it was being used as a storage facility for a handful of old props from TV shows like *M*A*S*H* and films like *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*.

There, in the middle of the floor, were three enormous white shipping crates. It was clear from the markings on them that they had recently been returned from Japan—and just visible were the words "Friday Robot". I held my breath as one of the three studio Teamsters lifted the crates to reveal... *a white refrigerator with claws!* (At least, that's what it looked like to me.)

As I later found out, the original Robot costume—or "hero" suit—that had been worn by Bob May in 83 episodes of the original series was extensively altered in the 1970s for a Saturday morning kiddie show called *MYSTERY ISLAND*. It had also been picked at and many of its few remaining original parts pilfered.

"It's lucky you called us when you did," said the head of Fox studio operations when I inquired about the fate of the robot the next day. "We're about to get rid of all those old props, so if you have a use for it, go ahead, but please don't return it." "You really don't want it back? Even after we restore it?" I could barely contain myself. "We have no rights to use it if it looks like the *LOST IN SPACE* robot," he intoned. "Besides, if we calculated how much the damn thing has cost us to store it, we could have built ten of them!"

I now got a lesson in both studio accounting and "cost-to-benefit" analysis. I moved what was left of Robot B9 over to my office and then asked Bob Borowski what I needed to do next. (Bob was now my assistant.) "Call Greg Jein," was his reply.

As it turned out, Greg was and is an



TOP: Robot actor Bob May sulking up once more for the *LIS* cast reunion. **ABOVE:** Kevin Burns with *LIS* original cast members Mark Goddard, Jonathan Harris, and Bill Mumy. **LEFT:** The Robot, as re-imagined for the show *MYSTERY ISLAND*.

Academy Award-winning special effects model builder. He is also a big fan of classic Hollywood props. Greg actually had the original "stunt robot" that was built for *LOST IN SPACE*'s third and final season. He also had the molds and many of the original parts that had been stripped off for the robot's *MYSTERY ISLAND* makeover.

"Can it be restored?" I sheepishly asked Greg. "Yes... but it will be expensive," he cautioned me. "How much?" "Can you get me a set of *GREEN HORNET* episodes on tape?" he inquired. "Tomorrow," I said. "Then, if you cover my costs, I'll do it for free."

What a break! The *LOST IN SPACE* robot would finally be restored—and by the only person who had the materials to do it. Ten months and \$10,000 later, the Robinsons' robot would once again be ready for the cameras.

It was in the summer of 1990 that a friend of mine, Gary Sohmers, told me he was doing a big collectibles show in Boston and was looking for an attraction for a marketing "hook". I said, "Well, it's the 25th anniversary

of *LOST IN SPACE*. I know Billy Mumy and I have the Robot!" To say Gary was "excited" would be an understatement.

I then called Bill and asked if he was interested in helping me put together a reunion. The principal cast had not seen each other together in fifteen years or more and, unfortunately, Guy Williams had passed away the previous year.

Billy made the initial phone calls and then I followed up. "Is Jonathan doing it?" June Lockhart probed. "Yes," I said (even though I hadn't spoken to him yet). Then I called Jonathan. "Is Lockhart doing it?" he inquired. Again, my answer was the same. "Yes," I said.

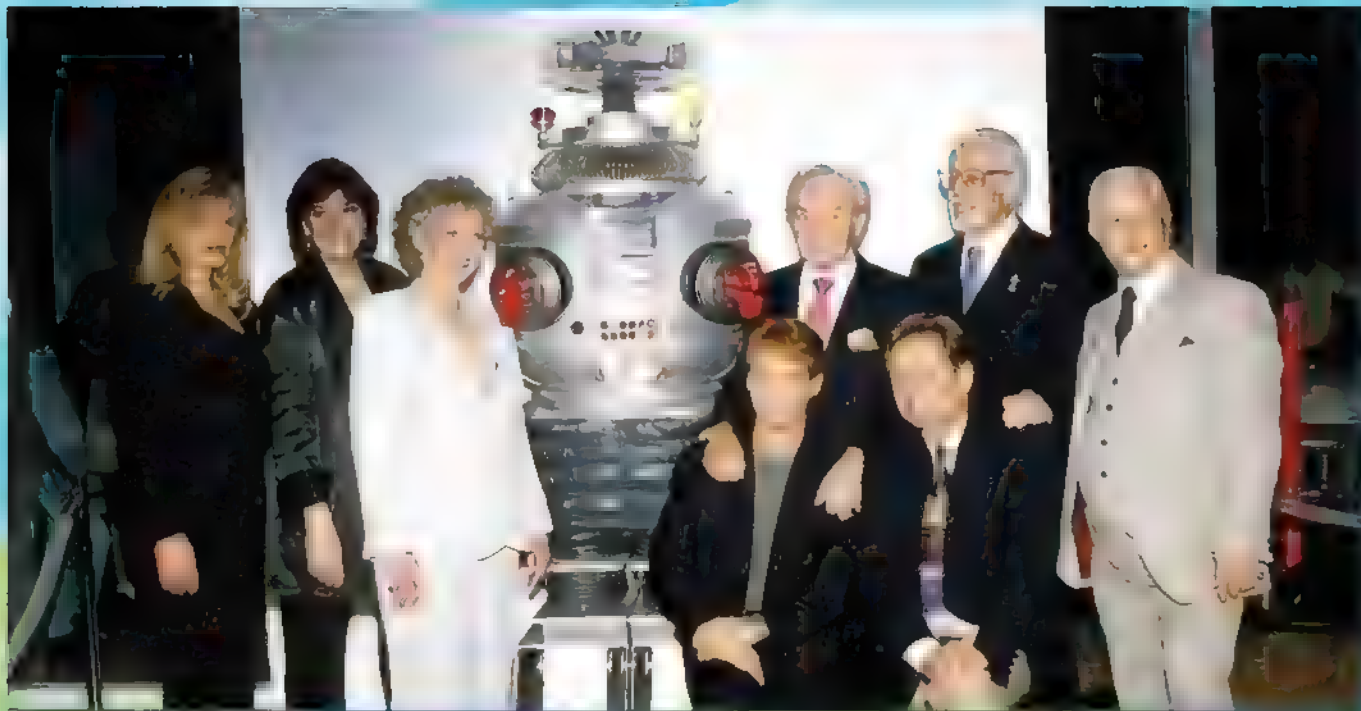
Although I had heard of some friction between Jonathan and June due to Jonathan's late inclusion into the original series and then becoming the show's focal point, it wasn't evident in Boston. Everyone had a great time and some lifelong friendships were reaffirmed. The event normally drew about 28,000 people, but that year it drew 35,000. *LOST IN SPACE* was a big draw because of all the media attention. The cast loved it.

From that point on I became determined to prove to my colleagues at Fox that *LOST IN SPACE* was viable and that a reunion movie was long overdue.

Even Irwin Allen was becoming interested. Shortly before the Boston event he invited Jonathan to join him for lunch at one of his favorite eateries. "I'm interested in making a movie of *LOST IN SPACE*," Irwin stated. "Too late," answered Jonathan. "You should have done it twenty years ago. We're all too old now." Nevertheless, Irwin would not be dissuaded. "Well, I know you're going to do one of those conventions in Boston, and if anyone asks if there's going to be a *LOST IN SPACE* movie I now give you permission to tell them, 'Possibility. Nothing definitive.' Can you remember that?"

But one year later, much had changed. On November 2, 1991, Irwin Allen passed away after a long battle with heart disease. Now his widow, Sheila Mathews Allen would be in charge of the property and—even though she had acted in several of Irwin's productions, including three episodes of





The reunited cast on "Blastoff Day" (L-R): Marta Kristen, Angela Cartwright, June Lockhart, Billy Mumy, Jonathan Harris, Mark Goddard, Dick Tufeld, and Bob May.



LOST IN SPACE—no one knew if she was interested in doing a LOST IN SPACE movie or not.

Once again I was called into one of the executive offices at Twentieth Century Fox Television. "Apparently Mrs. Allen wants us to do a LOST IN SPACE movie. Should we?" "Yes!" I enthused.

It didn't happen, of course. I found out a few weeks later that Mrs. Allen ended up shopping those movie rights to a small production company by the name of Prelude Pictures. Prelude Pictures, in turn, shopped the rights to New Line. In 1998, New Line released the now infamous LOST IN SPACE feature film starring Gary Oldman as Dr. Smith.

Now, I have to confess that during the period in between the time Mrs. Allen started shopping the movie rights and the New Line movie was released, I never gave up hope that someday I would have the chance to produce my own LOST IN SPACE television series. If anything it was during this period that I became determined to prove that Fox was incredibly shortsighted to let those rights leave the company—as much as I was determined to prove to Mrs. Allen that there was at least one person at Fox (i.e., me) who really valued her husband and his legacy.

To this end, while still an executive at Fox (but now running a documentary division called Foxstar Productions) I developed and produced a string of LOST IN SPACE and Irwin Allen-themed TV specials, including "The Fantasy Worlds of Irwin Allen", "Lost in Space Forever" (with New Line), "AMC Backstory: The Towering Inferno", and the A&E Biography on Jonathan Harris ("Never Fear, Smith is Here").

It should come as no surprise that, by now, the original cast of LOST IN SPACE and I had become very good friends—so much so that we would schedule frequent lunches at the studio just so we could listen to Jonathan tell his incredibly funny (and frequently filthy) showbiz stories.

June Lockhart would regale us with her adventures flying over the North Pole, sitting with the White House Press Corps or visiting NASA and chatting with orbiting astronauts.

It was also during this period that I met the only other Fox executive who cared about Irwin Allen's legacy and its potential as much as I did: Jon Jashni.

When I met Jon, he was an executive with Fox Family Films, a feature film division that was then producing the ICE AGE films as well as EVER



AFTER (a Cinderella remake starring Drew Barry more). Jon was (and is) very smart and very strategic. He's much quieter than I am (until he gets to know you, then... watch out). He also has a keen wit and a devastatingly dry sense of humor. We hit it off instantly.

The disappointing box office performance of New Line's *LOST IN SPACE* served to be a real "wake-up call" for Sheila Allen. She often confided that she felt poorly treated by New Line once her deal with them was closed. She also didn't like the final result. In contrast, she made it clear that she was very much pleased with the things I was doing at Fox to honor her late husband.

It was then, in the fall of 1998, that I went to Sheila with an offer Jon Jashni

and I would each leave our executive jobs at Fox and form a partnership to be called Synthesis Entertainment. Synthesis would then enter into an agreement with both Space Productions (the entity that owns *LOST IN SPACE*) and Irwin Allen Properties, LLC (which has various remake and sequel rights to the other Allen properties like *LAND OF THE GIANTS*, *THE TIME TUNNEL*, and *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*). From our respective vantage points (mine in television, Jon in features) we would shepherd the Irwin Allen franchises into the 21st century.

I am happy and grateful to say that Sheila loved the idea.

Since the formation of Synthesis

Entertainment in 1999 and until her death in November 2013, Jon and I worked very closely with Sheila on everything. She trusted us and we adored her.

When the *LOST IN SPACE* remake and sequel rights reverted back to Sheila and Space Productions in 2002, Jon and I made another run at Twentieth Century Fox—but this time, as a possible television series.

We were already working with Fox on a pilot for a new version of Irwin's *THE TIME TUNNEL* and Fox made it clear that if Jon and I were involved with the Allen properties, Fox wanted to be involved with us.

Well... it sounded good.

Before you could say, "Danger, Will Robinson," we were meeting with Jeff



Gaspin at NBC (who, as it turned out, is a big *LOST IN SPACE* fan). Because the New Line movie had already "poisoned the well" for a remake, I suggested the idea of a two-hour TV reunion movie and possible pilot that would reunite the original cast (except for Guy Williams, of course). It would also feature new characters who rescue the Robinsons—even though it means they become "lost in space" themselves. NBC loved the idea and quickly ordered a script by Brent Maddock and S.S. Wilson (*TREMORS*). The classic TV cast loved the idea—and we were literally weeks away from getting it into production when tragedy struck: Jonathan Harris died—from a blood clot that traveled from his leg to his heart. I had just visited with him and his wife

Gertrude only a few hours before—when he informed me that he had rewritten his part (as we knew he would).

Everyone was devastated.

The next year, Doug Petrie, a very talented writer who was under contract to Twentieth Century Fox Television, pitched Jon and I his concept for a *LOST IN SPACE* remake—one that would be much more faithful to Irwin Allen's original pilot ("No Place to Hide") than the series was.

We took the idea to four networks, and all four networks wanted in. CBS seemed the most excited, especially when the head of programming revealed she had a B9 Robot toy in her office.

But Fox (our partners at the time) preferred the offer from the now-defunct

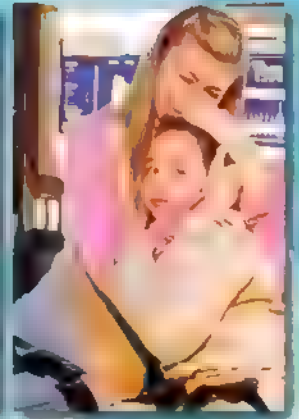
WB—and it was soon apparent that going to the WB was a huge mistake.

Doug's idea was for a stripped-down, no frills version of "The Swiss Family Robinson" in space. No Dr. Smith. No Robot. (Well... at least, not initially.) We got a top budget and a top director (John Woo), but it soon became clear that the WB didn't want *LOST IN SPACE*—they wanted "Lust in Space". Endless revisions to the script shifted the focus to the *EVERWOOD*-type romance between 18 year-old Judy Robinson (Adrienne Palicki) and heart-throb pilot Don West (Mike Erwin).

For the most part, Jon and I got along well with Doug, who was serving as the "showrunner" while John Woo was finishing up *PAYCHECK*. Our only real conflict had



Despite having John Woo direct the pilot, a 2003 attempt to resuscitate the original series on the WB took a wrong turn when it missed out on that classic LIS feel.



to do with our strong insistence that a show based on LOST IN SPACE needed to have a robot. "Well, at least my robot will not be a man in a suit," Doug boasted. "Doug, even C-3P0 is a man in a suit," I responded. "R2-D2 is a man in a suit. It's really hard to do a complete CGI robot that will be both believable and affordable."

The solution? The Robot was played by a marionette! And not even a full one—they only built the upper torso. In the pilot, Will Robinson would keep it in a trunk and open it up as needed. I was devastated. I mean, there it was, this half-baked B9 moving its arms wildly and going, "Warning! Warning!" I went home crying every night.

THE ROBINSONS LOST IN SPACE (as it was called) was not the LOST IN SPACE Jon and I wanted to make. As it turned out, it wasn't the LOST IN SPACE anyone wanted to make, but we did learn a lot about what not to do next time.

In the years since that unfortunate pilot was produced, Jon and I have each managed to have very successful and otherwise independent careers. Jon is currently President and CCO of the enormously successful Legendary Pictures (GODZILLA, THE DARK KNIGHT, PACIFIC RIM, INCEPTION) and I have produced more than a few hundred hours of mostly non-fiction and reality television (THE CURSE OF OAK ISLAND, ANCIENT ALIENS, THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR). Nevertheless, we have never given up on our dream to bring LOST IN SPACE back to television as a series—but we also don't want to do it *wrong*.



A few years before Sheila passed away, I went to her with a bold request. I told her that for Irwin's classic LOST IN SPACE to remain viable, it needed to be remastered in HD. Fox had already done this with Irwin's other properties, because Fox co-owned them. But LOST IN SPACE was never going to be restored unless Sheila did it at her own expense. "It's as if Irwin left you a valuable house but the roof leaks," I said. "If you don't maintain the library it will eventually fade away."

Luckily, Sheila agreed, and we then began a three-year process of restoring all of the picture and sound elements that were still safely tucked away in the Twentieth Century Fox vaults. Using the revenue that the show was still bringing in from cable and overseas, Sheila spent nearly \$700,000 on the project. It was a labor of love on her

part, as much for the fans as it was for Irwin.

One of my happiest days was when I told her that Fox was very impressed with our remastering efforts and had agreed to reimburse her for most of the expenses. In exchange, Fox would be granted the rights to distribute LOST IN SPACE for another 15 years.

As LOST IN SPACE's 50th Anniversary approaches (Yikes!), there is much talk about a Fox release of the classic series on Blu-ray. If all goes well, that should be in stores this fall. Of course, as with everything LOST IN SPACE, I always try to get Bill Mumy involved. I honestly believe that if he had not been such a cool guy when we first met 25 years ago I would have never kept all of this going. I credit Bill—along with Jonathan, June, Mark Goddard, Angela Cartwright, Marta Kristen, Bob May, Dick



FROM FAN TO 'FOREVER': Kevin Burns took his love for **LOST IN SPACE** (displayed in a childhood drawing, **BELOW**) and created a series of television specials featuring pieces of the set entirely rebuilt (**LEFT**).

Tufeld, and Sheila—with the reason **LOST IN SPACE** is as popular as it still is. They kept it alive for the fans.

As for plans to do a new **LOST IN SPACE** series, I am happy to report that Legendary Television has recently acquired those rights and will be working closely with Jon and I in an effort to do things right

Will we be successful? Only time can tell. Let's face it, a lot has happened since **LOST IN SPACE**'s premiere in 1965. America has changed. Tastes have changed. But to me, **LOST IN SPACE** will always be what I call "a dollar in the street". If you don't pick it up, somebody else is going to, because it has value.

I've felt every since I started working at Fox that **LOST IN SPACE** was under-regarded, and not well represented. When the Fox executives used to tell me, "It's not **STAR TREK**," I said, "No, it's not **STAR TREK**." **LOST IN SPACE** was *bigger* than **STAR TREK**. **LOST IN SPACE** ran three full seasons—longer than **BATMAN**, and for more episodes than **STAR TREK**. Its ratings were bigger, too.

Are we too late? Perhaps not. All the things Irwin Allen cared about—adventure, drama, imagination—are still the stuff from which great television is made. **LOST IN SPACE** was fun: it was visual. Does it deserve to survive for another forty, fifty years? I have to believe the answer is still yes. Because luckily, things like families, aliens, villains, spaceships, and monsters—just like robots—never grow old



SECOND STAR TO THE RIGHT

BY NEIL McNALLY

Bangarang! Never had a friend like me! I yam what I yam! Nanu, Nanu...

These quotes mean many things to many people, but above all, each one represents facets of the brilliant and creative mind of Robin Williams. With his recent untimely passing, critics and fans have understandably been drawn to his more dramatic works as a way to pay fitting tribute to the loss of his immense and wide-reaching talent—and with such classics as *DEAD POET'S SOCIETY*, *GOOD WILL HUNTING* and *GOOD MORNING VIETNAM*, you can't really go wrong. However, as important as his heavier films were, the ones that allowed him to take audiences to new worlds and fantastic places deserve an appreciation all their own. So sprinkle some of that pixie dust on that can of spinach, as what follows are some of Robin Williams' best forays into fantasy.



MORK CALLING ORSON

While Robin Williams was a creature of stand-up comedy, it was the medium of television that really introduced his unique and manic view of the world into America's living rooms. In February 1978, the legendary series *HAPPY DAYS*, already in its fifth season, decided to take a surreal turn with an episode titled "My Favorite Orkan". Mork, newly arrived in 1950s Milwaukee, sets about kidnapping Richie Cunningham (Ron Howard) as a specimen of his home planet of Ork.

The improvisational lightning bolt that Williams brought to the episode was instantaneous, and audiences of the time immediately wanted more. This left producer Garry Marshall and his team at a creative crossroads, since Mork's otherworldly appearance was explained away as a dream. A convenient new sequence was filmed, explaining that Mork had wiped everyone's mind of the incident, leaving it more open ended. This rejiggering gave audiences their wish, and *MORK AND MINDY* (1978-1982) was soon let loose upon the world.

Over its four seasons, *MORK AND MINDY* opened up Mork's world and, accompanied by his new friend Mindy (Pam Dawber), he brought new heights of manic lunacy to 1970s Boulder, Colorado. By all accounts, Williams was given free reign with the role, and striped shirts, suspenders, and *Nanu Nanu* quickly entered the pop culture zeitgeist.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Or more to the point, that's what the ABC television executives of the time should have adhered to over the course of its run. Rather than keeping to the first season's simple "fish out of water" scenario, frequent cast changes and a push for a romantic relationship between Mork and Mindy led to the show's increasing ratings drop. Not even the inclusion of the late, great Jonathan Winters as Mork's son Mirth could save the show from an eventual cancellation.

However, more than thirty years later, *MORK AND MINDY* continues to persevere. It's a time capsule of a period in television where comedians were trusted to do what they do best each week: entertain and truly make us laugh.



STRONG TO THE FINITICH

In 1929, the iconic character of Popeye the Sailor Man burst onto the comic strip page under the brilliant pen of renowned cartoonist E.C. Segar. Over a brief eight years, Segar filled Popeye's off-kilter world with such surreal and memorable characters as Olive Oyl, Swee' Pea, Wimpy, Eugene the Jeep, Poopdeck Pappy, and the villainous Sea Hag and Bluto. From comic strips to cartoons and beyond, Popeye's popularity continued to grow and grow until it seemed only natural that the spinach-eating sailor would one day grace the silver screen. Ultimately, it took 1980's **POPEYE**, directed by Robert Altman (*MASH*, *THE PLAYER*, *SHORT CUTS*), to make that happen and, in the process, give Robin Williams his first starring role in a motion picture.

The concept of a live action Popeye was always going to be a risky proposition, and to say the film is as surreal and cartoonish as its title character is a vast understatement. Serving as an origin story of sorts, the film finds Popeye arriving in the sleepy waterfront town of Sweethaven, searching for his long lost father Poopdeck Pappy. Along the way, he meets Olive Oyl, adopts Swee' Pea, and does battle with Bluto and the town's mysterious "Commodore", but not before saving that prized can of spinach for an explosive finale with buried treasure guarded by a deadly octopus.

What the film really excels at is giving Robin Williams such a vast comedic world to play in. It is his full realization of the character that imbues Popeye both with Segar's sweet sensitivity and the gleeful absurdity of the 1930s classic Fleisher Brothers cartoons. His rapport with Shelly Duvall's Olive Oyl is pitch perfect, and throughout all his mumbblings and "misprumunskiations", Popeye's love for his newly acquired family is evident and pure.

Like its subject matter, **POPEYE** is an often overlooked diamond in the rough. While its second act does suffer from budgetary issues, it's an underdog of a movie with outstanding set design and costuming that fully realizes Segar's world like none other.

A ROBIN AND A PYTHON

It wasn't until 1988 that Williams once again dipped his foot into the fantasy genre pool with a brief but highly charged cameo in **THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN**. Director Terry Gilliam's (*MONTY PYTHON: BRAZIL*, *TWELVE MONKEYS*) movie tells the tale of the fabled liar, Baron Munchausen (John Neville), and his outlandish adventures on Earth and everywhere else in between. While visiting the Moon, the Baron and company come across its vengeful and jealous King, played by Williams with great comedic zeal.

This first teaming of Williams and Gilliam is everything you would hope it to be. Williams's no-holds-barred approach immediately hits the ground running and is right at home with Gilliam's world of lunacy and high adventure. Who else could have pulled off a character that has a detachable flying head, an overcharged libido, and rides around through outer space on giant mechanical clockwork birds? Not many, to be sure.

While his appearance in *MUNCHHAUSEN* was brief and uncredited, it would take 1991's **THE FISHER KING** for the partnership of Williams and Gilliam to really get down to business. Grounded in reality, the film is a story of redemption and self-discovery between two men. Jack (Jeff Bridges) is a radio shock jock whose callous and inflammatory words cause an unstable caller to commit mass murder at a Manhattan bar. Parry, played by Williams, is a delusional homeless man obsessed with a quest to find the mythical Holy Grail after the loss of his wife in that same doomed Manhattan bar. Both are broken and unlikely friends who are thrown together in a struggle for their own emotional salvations amidst the vastness of New York City.

As Gilliam was purposefully avoiding a big budget film, the fantasy elements had to spring from Parry's own delirious hallucinations and the cavernous architecture of New York City itself. The most beautifully realized of these are Parry's persistent nemesis, the fiery and haunting Red Knight, and the waltz sequence within Grand Central Station.

THE FISHER KING still stands as one of Robin Williams's best and most moving Oscar-nominated performances. Parry is a fragile, broken man who is emotionally damaged; his only way to combat this is to live in a dark fantasy world of his own creation. While many people can glean their own interpretation of this, the film arguably is Gilliam and Williams at the peak of their creative games.





AN AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURE

If Robin Williams was predestined to play two iconic characters, one is Popeye and the other Peter Pan. To make a sequel to J.M. Barrie's classic children's novel *PETER AND WENDY* would be a daunting challenge for any actor. But under the direction of Steven Spielberg (E.T., *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*), 1991's *HOOK* gave Williams the perfect world stage to let his inner child shine.

In development for many years, *HOOK* brought audiences a Peter Pan story with a decidedly different twist. Here we visit Peter Banning, played by Williams, a successful and self-absorbed corporate lawyer who has little time for his wife and children. While visiting an aged Wendy Darling (Maggie Smith) in London, Peter discovers that Captain Hook (Dustin Hoffman) has abducted Banning's children and taken them to Neverland. With the aid of Tinkerbell (Julia Roberts), Banning unwillingly returns to the fantasy world that he has long forgotten and must become the "Pan, the Man" he once was.

In any other hands, an amnesiac Peter Pan—who has grown up to become exactly what he feared—may not have worked. But with Williams's deft acting, he pulls off Peter's multi-leveled character development with such sensitive ease that you quickly fall into the concept. His is a Peter Pan who is deeply conflicted as to who he is and his place in this new world. The Lost Boys? Tinkerbell? Flying? A zest for life? All of these concepts are foreign to him, but he keeps well within J.M. Barrie's central allegory of never losing the child within all of us. Without these things, Williams's Peter will never save his children or himself from Captain Hook.

Each time we watch it, thanks to Steven Spielberg and Robin Williams, we find our own inner Peter Pan who is always there to egg us on and remind us to grow.

WHOLE NEW WORLDS

Ironically, one of the most well-loved fantasy roles of Robin Williams's career is one that he doesn't actually appear in. It's his voice that gets the deserved share of the spotlight in the Walt Disney Company's 1992 movie *ALADDIN*. As the Genie of the Lamp, Williams found the perfect platform for his free-wheeling comedy, and through animation his stream of consciousness thoughts and ideas let him steal the show!

The film itself leads audiences on a wild ride as Aladdin, a street peddler, romances the beautiful Princess Jasmine while outwitting the Grand Vizier Jafar for control of the Magic Lamp. With songs by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken (*LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, *THE LITTLE MERMAID*), the film became an instant Disney classic upon its release.

At the time, the film was a bit of departure for Disney. After the worldwide success of 1991's *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, the company decided to artistically switch gears and focus on a more humorous and fun-loving story. Influenced by the Arabian Nights tales and the drawing style of cartoonist Al Hirschfeld, the animators allowed themselves to go along with and be influenced by Williams's sound recording sessions which, as you would expect, were largely improvised. Though this particular process was not the norm, Williams's participation allowed the film to be more than what it had originally intended to be, as Disney inside jokes and modern references flew by at a fast and frenetic pace!

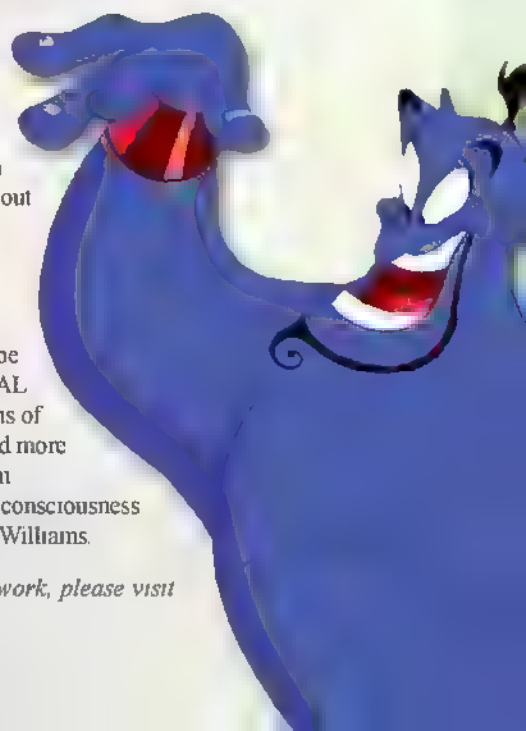
While the film is the sum of many parts, it is the Genie that becomes the emotional heart of the film. His wish to be free from the lamp is core to one of the film's central messages. When Aladdin grants him that wish by film's end, the audience is just as happy for the Genie, decked out in a tounsty Goofy hat and tropical shirt, as he leaves for adventures anew.

STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING

Over his close to forty-year career, Robin Williams graced more fantasy projects than can be contained in one article. Films like *WHAT DREAMS MAY COME*, *JUMANJI*, *BICENTENNIAL MAN*, *FLUBBER*, *TOYS*, and the *NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM* trilogy only serve to remind us of the joy he seemed to have for the genre as a whole. While some of these movies are remembered more fondly than others, his indelible and creative fingerprints remain ingrained firmly in all of them.

These are wide reaching fingerprints. They are the kind that will live forever in our collective consciousness and hearts, and through every one of us, so will the genius that was and will always be Robin Williams.

Neil McNally is an entertainment journalist living in Los Angeles. To read more of his work, please visit www.neilmcnallywriter.com, or write him at info@neilmcnallywriter.com.



WOLF LIKE ME:



WEREWOLVES IN FILMS OF THE EARLY 80's

by Alexandra West

For many of us, our first encounter with werewolves stems from either the Brothers Grimm or Charles Perrault in their versions of "Little Red Riding Hood". Both stories begin with Red off to visit her Grandmother. On her way she is stopped by a wolf, who engages her in conversation (a normal practice in European woods?). Once the Wolf learns where she is headed, he takes a shortcut, beating her to the Grandmother's house where he devours ol' Gran and waits for Red. When Red arrives, they play the infamous game of "What big eyes you have" and so on and so forth. The two most famous versions of this story end in different ways: while Red is eaten in both versions, the Grimms have her and her Grandmother rescued by a Huntsman who cuts them out of the Wolf's belly, while Perrault simply leaves Red eaten along with her Grandmother and this parting moral: *Children, especially attractive, well-bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various*

kinds of Wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.

While Perrault's take on the supposed moral is wildly outdated, he does touch on a salient point: not all monsters appear to be monsters. They change; they transform; they reveal themselves to you. While this is a common theme in horror films of all makes and models, it is rarely better represented than in werewolf films. While stories of werewolves have been around for centuries, they rose to popular consciousness in the Universal horror film era with the likes of *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935) and *THE WOLF MAN* (1941). Both of these films helped explain the rules of werewolfism, or lycanthropy. In scholar Sabine Baring-Gould's 1865 "The Book of Werewolves - Being an account of a terrible superstition", Baring-Gould explains the curse: "[It is] the change of a man or a woman in the form of a wolf, either through magical means, so as

to enable him or her to gratify the taste for human flesh; or through some judgment of the gods in punishment for some great offence. This is the popular definition. Truly it consists in a form of madness, such as may be found in most asylums."

While Universal horror films of the 30s and early 40s helped popularize other forms of monsters like vampires, Frankensteins, and mummies, the werewolf would only truly become popular again in the early 1980s. Werewolves made appearances in campy horror films such as *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* (1957) and the awkwardly titled *WEREWOLF IN A GIRLS' DORMITORY* (1961) but it wasn't until the 80s that the wolves were able to properly carry films that could both be campy and horrific. The 80s were a groundbreaking time in horror, with slashers and monsters regularly topping the box office. This was partially due to the advances in makeup and special effects, which were pushing the genre forward and gaining legions of fans along the way; but the 80s were also a time of



THE HOWLING

mass consumerism and excess. The public was being told to invest in the American dream, which had transformed from white picket fences into fast cars and fast women. The horror genre, at its best, consistently attempted to subvert the status quo—and what better way to scare an audience out of mindless capitalism by bringing them back to their animalistic nature?

Joe Dante was a young director fresh off the Roger Corman-produced *PIRANHA*, which Steven Spielberg called “the best of the *Jaws* rip-offs”. After being offered *THE HOWLING* (1981) based on the novel by Gary Brandner, which had already been in pre-production for several years, Dante brought on John Sayles—who had collaborated with him on *Piranha*—to completely rewrite the script. The two were able to keep some of Brandner’s novel, but by the time shooting began, *THE HOWLING* had adopted *PIRANHA*’s satirical, tongue-in-cheek tone. After news anchor Karen White (Dee Wallace) is attacked while investigating a serial killer who seems to have a special interest in her, she is advised to recover at “The Colony”. Karen and her husband attend the remote retreat and soon discover that all the other members are set on getting in touch with their true animalistic selves, acting on impulse and shunning the outside world that would domesticate them. They also get a little freaky when the moon comes out.

The Colony acts as a place for werewolves to gain control of their powers, which they see as a gift, not a curse. The members of The Colony view themselves as more in touch with their true desires and needs. They are away from the city and living simply in cabins. In the first scenes of the film, we follow Karen working with the police to try and help catch a serial killer. We follow her through a seedy part of town where the police lose track of her, leaving her on her own with the killer, who lures her into a sleazy X-rated theater. We see how revolting and degrading urban life has become. *THE HOWLING* strongly hints that our perversions still emerge even when we repress them, and that the healthier way to deal with our instincts is to embrace them. In the opening lines of the film, the leader of The Colony Dr. Wagner says in a television interview, “Repression. Repression is the father of neurosis, of self-hatred. Now, stress results when we fight against our impulses. We’ve all heard people talk about animal magnetism, the natural man, the noble savage, as if we’ve lost something valuable in our long evolution into civilized human beings.”

Wagner’s opening lines set the tone

for a perceived need to embrace lycanthropy and, in doing so, embrace humanity’s true nature. Humanity, he intimates, has become its own kind of monster, one that consumes itself at will. By removing individuals from the constraints of society, they can flourish. The film, however, also mocks this need to remove oneself from civilization. Once at The Colony, Karen sees the secretive and aggressive nature of those who think they are “above” the world we know. The members of The Colony see themselves as above humans, with one member saying, “Humans are our cattle.” *THE HOWLING* brilliantly mocks the worry that we’ve left some true part of ourselves behind in our journey to becoming civilized by indicating that even when we’re able to leave the normal world, we are still faced with in-fighting, violence, and politics. In *THE HOWLING*, everyone is a monster.

While *THE HOWLING* sets itself within the contemporary world, Neil Jordan’s *THE COMPANY OF WOLVES*

(1984) embraces the folkloric past of the werewolf. In the opening scene, we learn that we are in the dreams of Rosaleen (Sarah Patterson), a teen in early 1980s England. Her parents worry about her and her older sister calls her a "pest". Based on Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber", a collection of reimagined folklore, **THE COMPANY OF WOLVES** tells the story of small town besieged by wolves. After Rosaleen's older sister is killed by wolves, her parents send Rosaleen to stay with her Grandmother (Angela Lansbury). The Grandmother tells her several stories involving wolves, warning her about them and saying to never trust a man whose eyebrows meet. The tales vary, from a young couple about to consummate their wedding before the man disappears, returning years later with wolfish tendencies, to the story of a witch who was wronged by a nobleman and returns on his wedding day to exact her revenge by turning him and his bride into wolves. The film climaxes with the retelling of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story. While Rosaleen is on her way to see her Grandmother, she meets a handsome hunter who bets her a kiss if he beats her to her Grandmother's house. The Hunter arrives first, reveals himself to be a wolf, and kills the Grandmother. When Rosaleen arrives, her desire for the Hunter complicates her desire to avenge her Grandmother.



While **THE HOWLING** took a more satirical approach to werewolfism, Neil Jordan's **THE COMPANY OF WOLVES** chose to highlight the wolf's role in fantasy fables.

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES explores our relationship with the darker sides of love and desire, especially coming from a young woman. All the stories told throughout the movie deal with desire and right and wrong. In most of the stories the wolves are used as a vessel or a punishment for wrongdoings. After Rosaleen's sister's funeral, the Grandmother says of her sister, "All alone in the wood, and nobody there to save her!" Rosaleen asks, "Why couldn't she just save herself?" The Grandmother says that Rosaleen is only a child and has much to learn. But in looking at THE COMPANY OF WOLVES, it's obvious that the Grandmother's lesson is relevant as Perrault's moral. Throughout the film we witness Rosaleen experience the world through first kisses and werewolves and learn that while not everything is as it seems, nothing is fully evil.

The Grandmother's view that men are evil and trapped by their instincts and that women are victims of their actions dominates the first half of the film. The tone shifts as Rosaleen begins to tell the stories, first to her mother. The film follows the standard horror film trope of woman as victim, but by the end, completely transforms the narrative, relieving both men and women of

their standard societal norms and allowing them to transform as they wish, even into a wolf. THE COMPANY OF WOLVES uses the social changes since the late sixties to reexamine fairy tales and folklore, making them progressive and challenging. They are no longer simply moral fables to ensure that young women keep their virtue intact. THE COMPANY OF WOLVES shows that we all have a little wolf inside of us, and that those that oppress those desires are the ones that become victims, because they will never learn to adapt.

Both THE HOWLING and THE COMPANY OF WOLVES are part of a larger werewolf film tradition that emerged in the 1970s. From AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (1981) to TEEN WOLF (1985) to SILVER BULLET (1985), the theme of a return to nature and shape shifting was prevalent. Not only were makeup and effects artists like Rick Baker and Rob Bottin at the top of the game, but horror was becoming popular for mainstream consumption. Filmmakers wanted to tell stories about monsters that weren't just a problem for the Victorian elite—they were in all of us.

More recently, John Fawcett's GINGER SNAPS (2000) equates lycanthropy with

a young woman's transition into adulthood. Marshall's DOG SOLDIER (2002) pits the hyper-masculinized British army forces against the even more frightening countryside werewolf population. And Len Wiseman's UNDERWORLD (2003) tries to answer the age old debate of who would win in a fight, vampires or werewolves, while making werewolves the tragic underclass to the noble vampire. Werewolves have grown into increasingly tragic figures. They are monsters who emulate humanity's supposed true desires and are consistently punished for that.

The werewolf symbolizes a return to our true instincts. Unlike vampires or zombies, werewolves are very much alive. Almost painfully so. The nature of the monstrosity might result in memory loss when they transform or give them animalistic qualities that permeate their whole lives. No matter what mythology a film decides on, the werewolf always has some knowledge of what they have done or what they could do. THE HOWLING and THE COMPANY OF WOLVES present stories that show us that there is some ultimate desire to return to our animalistic state, but that once we do, there is no place for us in the world we now know.



When "Being your pet to dinner" day gets out of hand.

URBAN LEGENDARY

BRANDON SEIFERT WRITES THE HARVESTER

BY HOLLY INTERLANDI

The name *Legendary* is certainly synonymous with quality genre filmmaking, but in 2014, the company made forays into a new realm: comic books. Home to Grant Morrison and Frazer Irving's head-bending *ANNIHILATOR* and Judd Winick and Geoff Shaw's explosive *A TOWN CALLED DRAGON*, among others, *Legendary's* comic publishing imprint has now turned to horror writer Brandon Seifert to pen *THE HARVESTER*—a mysterious and violent combination of folklore, urban legend, and superheroics. Seifert admits that it's a bit of a departure for him. We discussed this departure, as well as the seeds of *THE HARVESTER* and where it might be going, in a recent interview.

Famous Monsters. I'm a big fan of your previous series *WITCH DOCTOR* was sort of cheeky, like an episode of *DOCTOR WHO*. *SEEKERS OF THE WEIRD* was also awesome—it had that weird Disney-fied *BLACK CAULDRON* feel. But both of them had a lot of light moments. And when I read the first issue of *THE HARVESTER*, it struck me as very different, because there's not a lot of humor. It's quite brutal. How did you come to tackle this different tone in your work, and do find it easier or more difficult?

Brandon Seifert. Thank you, I'm glad you liked the other books I've done! Yeah, *WITCH DOCTOR* and *SEEKERS OF THE WEIRD* were both sort of on the lighter end for me. *HARVESTER* is more like my run on *HELLRAISER*. But I am apparently

pathologically incapable of *not* writing jokes or funny lines or snark into my comics. There's not much in this first issue, but there will definitely be more later, especially with the characters of Vicki and Justin. I like humor in works that aren't comedy. It's a really good emotional palate cleanser.

FM. I also like the format of the first issue. It's a frame story—that is, the character of Vicki tells the story of the Harvester instead the book doing so directly. What about the frame story method works for *THE HARVESTER*?

BS. One of the things I like about it is that the Harvester is an urban legend. I think of him as a kind of Candyman meets Superman. So, presenting the Harvester

action sequences as stories that somebody is telling really works for that.

FM. You mentioned Candyman and Superman. The main character, Vicki, of course speaks a lot about folklore and moral fables. Is the Harvester a result of your putting multiple legends together, or something completely new? How are you going to try to make this particular character stand out as—pardon the pun—*legendary*?

BS. It started out as an idea from *Legendary* CEO Thomas Tull. He had the story and some of the characters. He also had a character that we'll be introducing soon who is sort of a Lex Luthor type. We first sat down a few years ago, and Thomas explained the idea to me, and I saw a lot of





potential there. As far as I know, I don't believe it was any kind of mashup. Looking at the idea he'd come up with, one of the things I found most interesting was that if there is this figure and he comes and massacres a bunch of people, there are going to be police records; it's going to make the news, and if he leaves survivors, there are going to be people telling stories about him for however long he exists. And over time, those stories will morph and change and different people will have different opinions about him or ideas of who or what he is and what he does. I did a lot of research into urban legends, as well as stuff like spree killings and rampage killings.

FM. So it was *Legendary* who came to you, then?

BS. It was Thomas Tull is somebody who really likes stories

and genre fiction, and he has a lot of ideas for stories that of course he doesn't have time to actually write.

FM. Do you prefer that? When someone gives you a prompt? Or do you like telling stories that are wholly your own?

BS. I think my favorite thing in comics is telling original stories, because of course they are really specifically tailored to my interests and strengths as a writer. But one of the ways I come up with original stories is by giving myself writing challenges, and in a lot of cases I'm looking at other stories that I like, or other stories I don't like but see potential in, and extrapolating from there. So working on projects like *THE HARVESTER*, or *SEEKERS OF THE WEIRD* for Marvel—projects where other people came up with the initial framework—is like a writing exercise for me. Like a challenge. Plus, it's somebody else doing part of the work. [laughs]

FM. [Artist] Eric Battle has a very distinctively sketchy shading style, and Lee Loughridge is one of the best colorists in comics right now. How did you pick that team?

BS. Eric Battle was someone that my fantastic editor Bob Schreck had already worked with on the *GODZILLA* graphic novel. He sent me his samples and asked if I thought he'd be a good fit, and I thought he really would be. One of the things that Thomas wanted to do and really stressed in his idea was to make sure *THE HARVESTER* had more of a supernatural action tone than a horror one. This is a sort of metaphysical vigilante character. Eric's style is not straight up superhero art, but there's an element of that to it that really works for the character.

FM. It does sort of read like a superhero book. Of course, there are horror elements—my favorite part is when he's plowing through a mess of bikers and there are intestines splattered across the page [laughs]

BS. Yeah. Eric ended up making the violence a lot more graphic than it had been in my head! I like how no-holds-barred it is.

FM. On the subject of horror, is there anything that influenced you—either on *THE HARVESTER* in particular, or in general? What was it about horror that made you decide you wanted to pursue it?

BS. Horror is something that I came to kind of late. Well, actually, I came to it really early and liked it, but realized I had a lot of difficulty with it. My early horror experience—and you're going to laugh, because everybody laughs—I was terrified as a kid of *THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS* cartoon. Just the cartoon! My parents wouldn't let me see the movies, but I loved the cartoon so much that I had a lot of trouble sleeping. It seriously impacted my sleeping patterns for the rest of my life. I have a lot of idiosyncrasies because of that cartoon which I loved and which also terrified me. It reached the point where they had to pull the plug. There was an episode about a were-chicken that sent me over the edge, and my parents were like, okay, we're cutting you off. I remember my mother saying, "Brandon has such an active imagination—maybe he'll grow up to be the next Stephen King!" And while I certainly have *not* accomplished that, I do find it really funny that my mother predicted I would be a horror writer. Sci-Fi had always been my first love. My first horror true loves were H.P. Lovecraft, which is very blatantly on the page

in *WITCH DOCTOR*, and then Clive Barker. Cowriting the *HELLRAISER* comic with Clive for a while was amazing.

It's hard for me to put into words what is about the horror genre that I have an affinity for. I really love the supernatural because I find it works well as a way of talking about the real world metaphorically. I came into writing comics through journalism, so I'm used to doing writing as a research-based empirical thing.

FM. My last question is kind of an indulgent one—it's something I ask a lot of writers. I'm a total sucker for tattoos as narrative symbolism, and I noticed that the Harvester has a sun handprint on his chest...?

BS. That was something I came up with. I am also a sucker for tattoos with narrative symbolism. And I love the combination of the abstracted hand print that sort of looks like a rising sun. The book wasn't always called *THE HARVESTER*—there were some other titles that involved the word "rising", because of the way he just rises out of the earth. When we get to his origin story, you'll see where that tattoo came from and more of what it signifies. It's actually more of a brand than a tattoo. It's something that was burned into him—a mark of ownership.



TRAPPED UNDER ICE

INTERVIEW BY ED BLAIR

Doc Savage was one of the most popular characters of the pulp era. But long after creator Lester Dent passed away, author Will Murray picked up the mantle and continued documenting the exploits of The Man of Bronze. Now he's Doc back again for an epic adventure against an adversary drawn from the history books in *THE ICE GENIUS*.

Famous Monsters: Doc is floating around the Shamo Black and Chris Hemsworth may tackle a new Doc Savage film at Sony, it only strengthens the argument that Doc is a character that just can't be kept down. What do attribute Doc's longevity to? **WM:** Doc Savage is either the first superhero or the last stage before superhero. He's the ultimate superman, what today we would call a meta-human. He doesn't have superpowers, but he was trained by scientists to be the best in every discipline imaginable, from science to the martial arts. The basic appeal of the character is hard to distill in a sentence. But he's the consummate pulp hero taking on challenges that would freak out the likes of James Bond and Indiana Jones—to name two heroes inspired by him. In my stories, Doc has battled a host of nightmare menaces ranging from world conquerors to enemy nations controlling weird superweapons. He'll make a great film hero. You watch and see.

FM: Now the series that you're writing, *THE WILD ADVENTURES OF DOC SAVAGE*, are these all original stories?

WM: With the exception of our bestselling title, *SKULL ISLAND*, where Doc Savage battles King Kong, every Wild Adventure so far has been written from a concept by Lester Dent, who penned most of his earliest adventures. One novel, *The War Makers*, is based on a 1935 outline by one of Dent's ghostwriters, Ryerson Johnson. It's both an honor and a privilege to work with this rare

material, and I hope to keep true to 1930s pulp. I don't write "emotional" in this any more than I do. Plus, all the original novels set under the Street with the name of Kenneth Robeson—once they're back in posthumous collaboration—meaning the line keeps it simple. I put my name on *Skull Island* because it was such a radical departure from a standard Doc adventure. Besides, Kenneth Robeson was one of my favorite writers growing up. Now I'm him!

FM: What were the origins of *THE ICE GENIUS*, and how did you arrive at the decision to bring Cadwiler Olden, a classic Doc villain, back into the fray in this one?

WM: In 1939, Lester Dent pitched the idea of one of Doc's men finding a Mongol warlord encased in ice, who came back to life and try to conquer the planet. His editor passed. I thought it would make a great Wild Adventure. But I needed to build the concept into an epic worthy of the idea. Hence, I revived the murderous midget, Cadwiler Olden, from an earlier novel. Actually, I first revived him in *THE MIRACLE MENACE*, which sets the stage for this story. He's a fantastic character. Think Miguelito Loveless from *WILD WILD WEST*.

FM: Because your Doc pieces are set in our real world, typically around WWII, do you ever find yourself at odds with, or limited by, real history?

WM: I try to write these stories with an

awareness of world conditions in the year I set my stories, whether it's 1933 or 1949. I don't start historical events, but in *THE ICE GENIUS* I saw a way to take the novel to another level by having the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor take place at a point in the story when the reader would think things couldn't get any worse. But they do. So *THE ICE GENIUS* became a war story. I needed Olden to provide a foil for the main villain.

FM: What's new for Doc in your adventures?

WM: I'm very excited to announce Doc Savage #200, *THE SINISTER SHADOW*. For the first time in novel form, the Man of Bronze and his dark counterpart, The Shadow, will come into open conflict. It starts when one of Doc's men is kidnapped, along with Lamont Cranston. This should bring the two heroes together, shouldn't it? But things go very badly when one of The Shadow's agents is captured and shipped off to Doc's Crime College for rehabilitation! Doc and The Shadow are like Superman and Batman—they work different sides of the same street, using different methods. So there's a built-in conflict which drives the story.

For more Doc Savage and his further adventures head on over to www.adventuresinbronze.com or to Facebook at *THE WILD ADVENTURES OF DOC SAVAGE*. Artwork by the infinitely talented Joe DeVito. Doc's adventures available at Amazon.com and BN.com.

KILLER OF GIANTS

JEREMY ROBINSON'S LATEST TOME PROMISES KAIJU, CHIMERAS, AND CARNAGE!

INTERVIEW BY ED BLAIR

Jeremy Robinson has been taking his love of classic monsters and using it to turn out one exciting novel after another. His JACK SIGLER series follows a team of Delta Force commandos who battle creatures that would make Ray Harryhausen proud: a hydra, armies of skeletons, giant golems, even Hercules himself. But he's been doing a saint's work by turning in one monster genre that has been woefully neglected: Kaiju!

His Nemesis series involves massive beasts of cosmic origins battling across earth as government forces chip in efforts to weaponize the kaiju. His newest, PROJECT 731, joins up with another of his series, ISLAND 731, a kind of Dr. Moreau on steroids where a super army of genetically enhanced chimeras has escaped their island and now threaten all mankind.

Famous Monsters. PROJECT 731 has a more complex background than the usual book series. And while you do like to tie your different book series together with the occasional cameo, this is much more extensive.

Jeremy Robinson. PROJECT 731 is almost like a hub at the center of a wheel, with different Robinson novel universes at the end of the spokes, bringing together new and old novels. Obviously, there are the Nemesis novels, PROJECT NEMESIS, PROJECT MAIGO and PROJECT 731. It also brings in ISLAND 731 in a very direct way, picking up where PROJECT MAIGO and ISLAND 731 both left off, fully merging the two stories. It also brings in the 2006, sci-fi adventure RAISING THE PAST, in a very big and hopefully surprising way for fans. For the astute reader, there are also connections to my novels BENEATH and XOM-B [see interview in *FM* #273], both of which take place in the future.

FM. Was that always the plan or was it a situation where you kind of just got hit with it one day and thought they may work well together?

JR. Yes and no. I have been planning a crossover event novel, like something Marvel Comics might do, but with novels, which to my knowledge has never been done. I have known Nemesis would be at the core of that, but wasn't sure how. Then I wrote

chapter 36, revealing Nemesis's origins, and everything fell into place. Suddenly, the groundwork was laid and dozens of novels were linked. It was like I had this puzzle of a maze and had figured out the rest, but was missing that last piece, then I found it in the sofa... of my brain. And it left this writer as pumped as I hope my readers are.

FM. Catch us up on the story so far. Where does PROJECT 731 start us out and where are we going?

JR. PROJECT 731 starts a year after the events of PROJECT MAIGO, which left Nemesis seemingly dead and Washington D.C. in ruins. It also picks up several years after the conclusion of ISLAND 731, revealing that the Tsuchi from the island—a chimera that can quickly reproduce by injecting its spawn into a living host—have survived. As things spiral out of control, a Tsuchi finds its way to Nemesis' not quite dead body and does what comes naturally. The result is Kaiju Tsuchi, an impressive body count, and more than one flattened city. Nemesis' arc takes center stage again as she continues to evolve as a character, despite being a 350 foot tall kaiju.

FM. Will there be more? It's not like there are a lot of people doing Kaiju novels these days, which is an absolute crime.

JR. Yes! The next Nemesis book is already in the works (in my imagination at least)

and should be out around this time next year. It will once again feature Nemesis, but there will also be another... large character taking center stage, and it's not another evil Kaiju. It will also fully set up the crossover novel, which should be out in 2016.

FM. On another note, your Jack Sigler Thriller series is probably your most famous. It's always had a really cinematic feel to it. Is there any chance we could get a big screen adaptation of it someday?

JR. I'm glad you asked, and thrilled to announce that I have signed a movie deal for PULSE, the first Jack Sigler Thriller! Director Jabbar Raisani, who won an Outstanding Special Visual Effects Emmy for his work on GAME OF THRONES, is at the helm so you know the Hydra, Regen Capybara, and all the other nasty creatures in PULSE are going to look amazing! And if the movie is a hit... well, there are many more books in the series.

To keep up with Jeremy Robinson and his furious pace that churns out around 5 books per year, head on over to www.jeremyrobinsononline.com. PROJECT 731 and the rest of his novels are available on Amazon.com, BN.com, and many other online and brick and mortar book sellers. "NEMESIS PRIME" artwork by FM favorite and IDW GODZILLA artist, Matt Frank.



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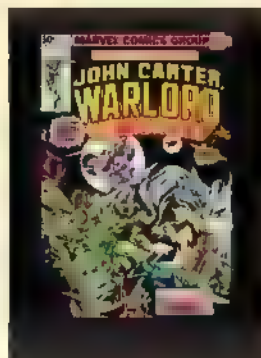
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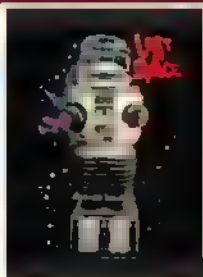
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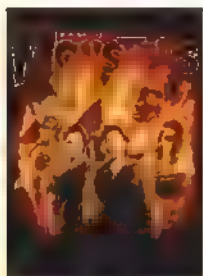
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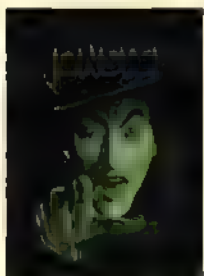
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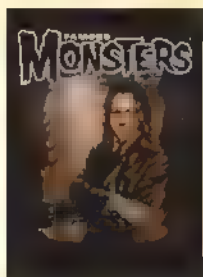
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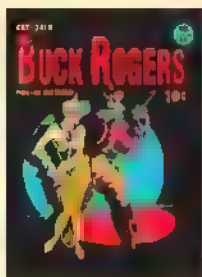
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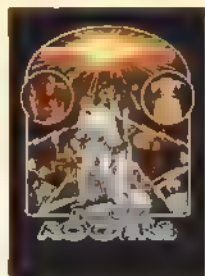
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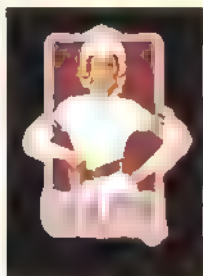
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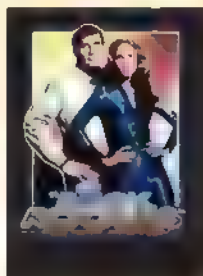
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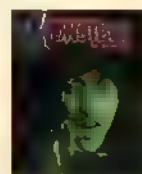
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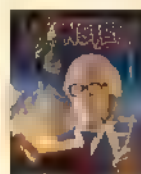
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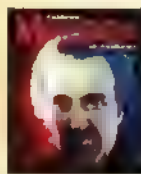
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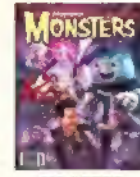
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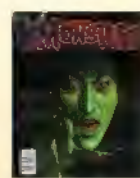
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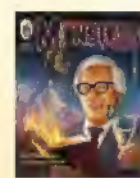
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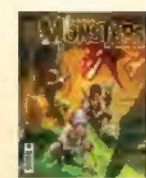
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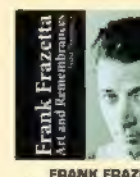
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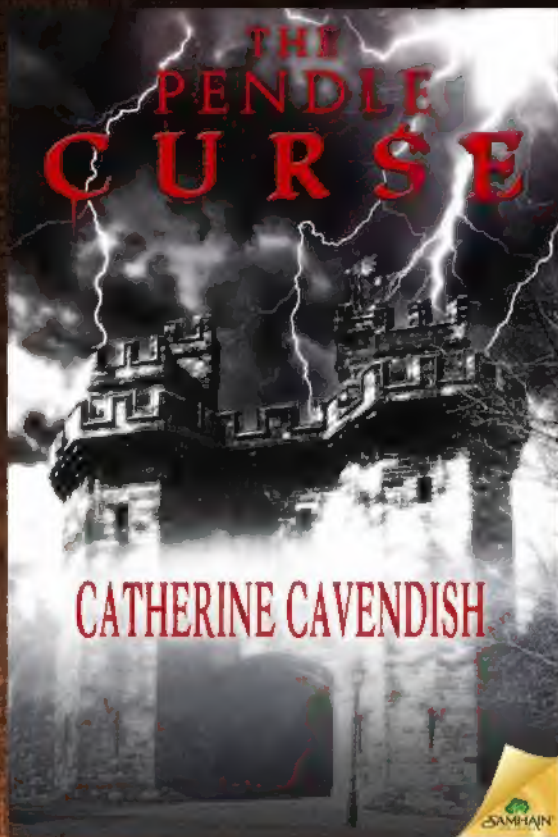
A detailed illustration of Tarzan and a lion in a savanna setting at sunset. Tarzan, a muscular man with dark hair and a determined expression, stands on the left, holding a long spear. He is wearing a leopard-print loincloth and has a quiver of arrows on his back. A lion with a large, dark mane stands to his right, looking towards the right. The background features a warm sunset sky with orange and yellow hues, silhouettes of acacia trees, and rolling hills. The overall style is reminiscent of classic pulp magazine illustrations.

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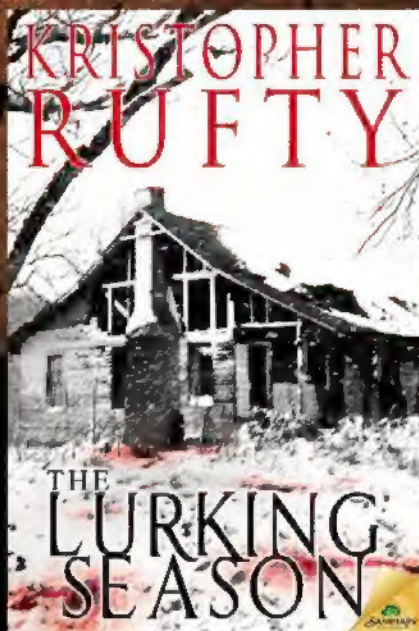


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